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INFLUENCERS OF EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP
WORKING BETWEEN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY
SECTOR ORGANISATIONS IN LIVERPOOL

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Abstract

With the election of a Coalition Government in May 2010, the concept of “partnership” has never been so prominent in public policy. This builds on a foundation of partnership working playing an increasing role in the policy arena following on from ‘New Labour’s Modernisation Strategy’ and initiatives such as area regeneration partnerships. Partnership working has become the recognised solution to addressing entrenched complex social issues, such as poverty, based on the recognition that a single public agency cannot address the complexity of social problems alone.

Furthermore, the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) is becoming of greater concern to policy makers with the recognition that the sector plays a fundamental public service delivery role, especially to vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. This remit is likely to increase with the publication in October 2010, of the Coalition’s Government strategy for Voluntary Community Sector organisations, which places the sector as central to transforming public service delivery and building the Government’s civil society vision.

However, it is well-established that the public sector as a whole is facing in mounting financial pressure and all public agencies will be required to deliver both greater efficiencies and service improvements. Against a background of increasing partnerships, a more visible role for the VCS, and significantly reducing resources, VCS organisations will increasingly have to work together to achieve their aims and maintain service delivery to vulnerable people. Therefore, this research will seek to understand the drivers and factors influencing partnership working between VCS organisations, through undertaking a comprehensive literature review and primary research.

An ‘interpretivist’ paradigm underpins a case study approach with five VCS organisations in Liverpool. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key managers from the Case Study organisations supported by a limited amount of documentary evidence. The primary research data will be analysed to identify key themes and the outcomes explored in the context of the literature. An analysis of specific factors influencing partnerships will be undertaken to improve our understanding of effective partnerships between VCS organisations.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose. All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed: _____

Date: 3rd December 2010

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT	3
DECLARATION	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
LIST OF TABLES	8
LIST OF FIGURES	8
LIST OF CHARTS	8
Chapter 1 – Introduction	9
1.1 Introduction	9
1.2 Background to the research	9
1.3 Research question	10
1.4 Justification for the research	11
1.5 Methodology	12
1.6 Outline of Dissertation	13
1.7 Definitions	13
1.8 Summary	15
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	16
2.1 Introduction	16
2.2 Background and policy context	16
2.2.1 Introduction	16
2.2.2 Definition of partnership working	16
2.2.3 Public policy and drivers for partnership working	17
2.2.4 Definitions of Voluntary Community Sector	19
2.2.5 Public policy context for Voluntary Community Sector	20
2.3 Theoretical Approaches to Partnership Working	21
2.3.1 Introduction	21
2.3.2 Corporate Strategy Models	22
2.3.3 Life Cycle and Stage Theories	23
2.3.4 Behaviour Based Models	25
2.4 Influencers of Partnership Working	28
2.4.1 Introduction	28
2.4.2 Critical Success Factors	28
2.4.3 Barriers to partnership working	32
2.5 Partnership Working within Voluntary Community Sector	33
2.6 Conceptual Model	35

2.7 Summary.....	37
Chapter 3 - Methodology	38
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Research Philosophy	38
3.3 Research Strategy	39
3.3.1 Justification for selected paradigm and methodology	39
3.3.2 Limitations of methodology	40
3.3.3 Rejected Methods	41
3.4 Research Design	41
3.4.1 Design of instrument	42
3.5 Research Procedures.....	46
3.5.1 Sampling and Access	46
3.5.2 Administration of research procedures	49
3.5.3 Data Analysis	50
3.6 Ethical considerations.....	51
3.7 Summary.....	52
Chapter 4 - Findings	53
4.1 Introduction	53
4.2 Secondary Data.....	53
4.2.1 VCS Organisations funded by Supporting People Programme.....	53
4.3 Analysis of Respondents	55
4.3.1 Introduction	55
4.3.2 Case Study Organisation 1	55
4.3.3 Case Study Organisation 2	56
4.3.4 Case Study Organisation 3	56
4.3.5 Case Study Organisation 4	56
4.3.6 Case Study Organisation 5	57
4.3.7 Summary.....	57
4.4 Findings for each research question	58
4.4.1 Introduction	58
4.4.2 Findings for second research aim	58
4.4.2.1 Organisational context and drivers for partnership working	58
4.4.2.2 Nature of partnerships with other VCS organisations	60
4.4.2.3 Aims and objectives of partnerships with other VCS organisations	62
4.4.2.4 Change in partnership working across VCS organisations	64
4.4.2.5 Measuring performance and evaluating success	65
4.4.3 Findings for third research aim.....	67
4.4.3.1 Organisational issues with partnership working with VCS organisations	68
4.4.3.2 Decision-making and governance within VCS partnerships.....	70
4.4.3.3 Impact on external policy and environment on VCS partnerships.....	72
4.4.3.4 Influencers of partnership working.....	74
4.5 Summary.....	77

Chapter 5 – Analysis and Conclusions 78

5.1 Introduction	78
5.2 Critical evaluation of adopted methodology	78
5.3 Analysis / conclusions for each research aim	79
5.3.1 Introduction	79
5.3.2 Analysis and conclusions for first research aim	79
5.3.3 Analysis and conclusions for second research aim	80
5.3.3.1 Organisational context	80
5.3.3.2 Nature of partnership working	82
5.3.3.3 Changing nature of partnerships	82
5.3.3.4 Measuring performance and evaluating success	83
5.3.4 Analysis and conclusions for third research aim	84
5.3.4.1 Impact of external environment and public policy context	84
5.3.4.2 Influencers of partnership working	85
5.3.5 Analysis and conclusions for fourth research aim	87
5.4 Conclusions about the research question	87
5.5 Overall Conclusions	88
5.6 Limitations of study	89
5.7 Opportunities for further research	90
5.8 Summary	90

Chapter 6 - Recommendations 91

6.1 Introduction	91
6.2 Key recommendations	91
6.2.1 Recommendations for Liverpool City Council	91
6.2.2 Recommendations for VCS organisations	92

BIBLIOGRAPHY 93

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Background to Supporting People Programme	104
Appendix 2 Summary of Factors from Literature Review	105
Appendix 3 Detail of Research Instrument Design	119
Appendix 4 Participant Information and Consent Form	126
Appendix 5 Interview Questions and Guide	129
Appendix 6 Data Analysis Tool	132
Appendix 7 Summary of Research Ethics Framework	134
Appendix 8 Summary of Themes from Primary Research	136
Appendix 9 Summary of Factors from Primary Research	149
Appendix 10 Data Coding for Positive and Negative Factors	154

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Definition of Key Terms	14
Table 2.1 Pratt, Gordon, & Plamping, (2005)	26
Table 2.2 Mattesich & Monsey, (1992).....	27
Table 2.3 Critical Success Factors.....	28
Table 3.1 Research instrument design from literature review	42
Table 4.1 Summary Information on Case Study organisations	57
Table 4.2 Summary of data findings for organisational context and drivers	59
Table 4.3 Summary of data findings for the nature of partnerships	60
Table 4.4 Summary of data findings for aims and objectives of partnerships	62
Table 4.5 Summary of data findings for change in partnership working	64
Table 4.6 Summary of data findings for measuring performance and evaluation.....	65
Table 4.7 Summary of data findings for organisational issues in managing and developing partnerships.....	68
Table 4.8 Summary of data findings for decision-making and governance.....	70
Table 4.9 Summary of data findings for the impact of public policy and external environment	72
Table 6.1 Recommendations for Liverpool City Council	91
Table 6.2 Recommendations for Voluntary Community Sector	92

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Wilson & Charlton (1997)	24
Figure 2.2 Pratt, Gordon & Plamping, (2005).....	25
Figure 2.3 Effective Partnership Working – A Conceptual Model	36
Figure 3.1 Summary of Sampling Stages and Results.....	48

List of Charts

Chart 4.1 Type of VCS organisations funded by the Supporting People Programme in Liverpool	54
Chart 4.2 Remit of VCS organisations funded by the Supporting People Programme in Liverpool	54
Chart 4.3 Positive factors influencing partnership working as identified by Case Study Organisations	75
Chart 4.4 Negative factors influencing partnership working as identified by Case Study Organisations	76

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the background to the research; thereby establishing the context for this dissertation. The chapter commences with a brief background to partnership working and the role of the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS), followed by the research question. It will justify the need for the research and will concisely describe the research strategy. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the dissertation structure and will define key terms.

1.2 Background to the research

This research will seek to improve the understanding of partnership working between VCS organisations. There is a significant body of literature on partnership working and its role in public policy with many theorists agreeing that partnership working is not a “modern phenomena” (Southern, 2002). However, the current rhetoric of partnership working arises from Labour’s Modernisation Strategy (Rowe, 2006) which prompted the development of a number of partnership initiatives designed to “force collaboration between public, private and voluntary sectors;” for example Local Strategic Partnerships (Diamond, 2006).

In addition, partnership working has become the recognised solution to addressing entrenched complex social issues, such as poverty, based on the recognition that multi-agency responses are necessary to deal with the complexity of certain social problems (Marks, 2007; Glasby, Dickinson, & Peck, 2006). There is also an increasing drive for the state to strategically engage with the VCS, as the sector becomes of greater concern to policy-makers (Alcock & Scott, 2005). Both national and local Government view VCS organisations as having a critical service delivery role and theorists recognise that this scope is increasing. However, with reducing resources and the continuing drive for efficiency, VCS organisations are increasingly having to work in partnership to achieve their aims (Guo & Acar, 2005). Therefore, this research will seek to understand the drivers and factors influencing partnership working between VCS organisations.

There are a number of theories available to analyse and understand partnership working, which are mainly derived from corporate strategies developed during the 1960's and 1970's (Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004; Diamond, 2006). Furthermore, models have developed which depict partnership working in frameworks ranging from "life cycle" or staged models (Wilson & Charlton, 1997) to typologies of behaviors or structures (Pratt, Gordon & Plambling, 2005). In addition, there is a cohort of literature exploring the influences which impact on the effectiveness of partnership working. Therefore this research will explore the theoretical foundation of partnership working in the context of the VCS.

1.3 Research Question

The key area addressed during this research is the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations. This dissertation will focus on a small number of VCS organisations in Liverpool and will seek to identify:

"Influencers of effective partnership working between Voluntary Community Sector organisations within Liverpool."

This title suggests the following research aims:

- i. To understand the nature of contemporary literature on partnership working and VCS organisations
- ii. To understand the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool
- iii. To identify factors that influence effective partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool
- iv. To draw appropriate conclusions and make appropriate recommendations to improve effective partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool

The research question will be resolved during this dissertation through conducting primary research with five VCS organisations engaged in partnership working in Liverpool. Using an interpretative approach and adopting a qualitative research method, the primary research

will seek to identify the drivers, nature and factors influencing the Case Study organisation's partnerships.

1.4 Justification for the research

Having established the background of partnership working and the growth of the VCS in service delivery, this section will outline the justification for this research both on theoretical grounds and organisationally for Liverpool City Council (LCC).

Firstly, the literature acknowledges limitations in existing partnership working research, which is recognised as focussing on the “virtues” of partnership working and not the management of collaborative relationships (Glasby et al, 2006; Freeman & Peck, 2006). In addition, there is a lack of research into the VCS, despite a growing recognition that it is becoming an area of increasing importance. Scott and Russell, (2005) argue that the sector is “more prominent in policy discussions than at any time since the establishment of the modern welfare state. But research to date has failed to produce a well-developed knowledge base about the sector.”

Against a background of increasing partnerships and a more visible role for the VCS, researchers acknowledge that the specific characteristics of collaboration between VCS organisations have not been fully explored (Guo & Acar, 2005). Therefore, this research will seek to understand the drivers and attributes of partnership working between VCS organisations.

Furthermore, there is an increasing drive for Local Authorities (LAs) to work strategically with the VCS in delivering local aims and priorities and the role of the sector is recognised within Liverpool's Sustainable Communities Strategy which outlines the vision and priorities for Liverpool's communities (Liverpool First, 2008). An initial review of the VCS in Liverpool identified a potential 1600 organisations (Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services, 2008) and one of the key funders of these agencies is LCC via its Supporting People (SP) Programme (LCC, 2007). Furthermore, the VCS provides services to some of Liverpool's most deprived and vulnerable communities (LCC, 2010) and therefore it is critical that the nature and role of the VCS is understood.

However, it is well-established that the public sector as a whole will be facing increasing financial pressure and therefore LCC and partners, including the VCS will be required to deliver both greater efficiencies and service improvements. It is now crucial that LCC understands how to effectively facilitate partnership working with all agencies; especially VCS organisations who support some of the city's most vulnerable residents. Therefore, both funders such as LCC and the VCS as a whole require an increased understanding of how VCS organisations can work effectively together to deliver both maximum benefits and value for money. Therefore, this research will seek to identify the specific influences of effective partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool.

1.5 Methodology

This section outlines the methodology utilised to conduct primary research into the research problem. Firstly, the underpinning paradigm of this research will be that of an 'interpretivist or phenomenological' approach which is based on the belief that reality is "socially constructed" (Fisher, 2002). This will provide an appropriate framework to explore partnership working and its assigned meaning within organisations as the interpretivist paradigm seeks to understand the subjective nature of issues.

The literature review (see Chapter 2) also highlights that VCS organisations are complex and diverse in nature and that understanding partnership working contextually is critical. Therefore, the research strategy adopted is a case study approach as it can provide rich contextual detail in organisations (Scott & Russell, 2005, Yin, 2003). A purposive sampling technique will be utilised to select multiple (five) Case Study organisations, which allows for greater generalisations from the findings.

Finally, a single-method qualitative approach will be employed comprising of face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted with key managers from the Case Study organisations. A limited amount of documentary evidence is also considered to provide secondary data on both the Case Study organisations and the wider VCS in Liverpool. The primary research data will be analysed to identify key themes and the outcomes will be considered in the context of the literature.

1.6 Outline of Dissertation

The dissertation structure is as follows:

Chapter 1: This will provide an introduction and overview of the dissertation project. This will include the context and justification of the research, the research question and aims, an outline of the research methodology and definition of key terms.

Chapter 2: The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical basis for the dissertation, including an introduction to the Conceptual Model, which provides a framework to analyse the findings from the primary research.

Chapter 3: This will introduce the research methodology adopted; including an overview of the research philosophy and the research methods and design utilised. It concludes with the approach to sampling, analysis and ethical issues.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4 will present an analysis of the empirical findings of the research project.

Chapter 5: This will focus on a discussion of the research findings contextualised within the academic literature on partnership working and VCS. It will draw appropriate conclusions and highlight the limitations of the research.

Chapter 6: This purpose of this chapter is to conclude the dissertation project with a series of recommendations arising from the research.

1.7 Definitions

Table 1.1 defines key terms utilised during this dissertation.

Table 1.1: Definition of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Commissioning	“The securing the services that most appropriately address the needs and wishes of the individual service user, making use of market intelligence and research, and planning accordingly.” (Institute of Commissioning Professionals, 2010).
Effective Partnership Working	Partnerships, which deliver demonstrable benefits through positive outcomes for service users or better use of resources (Taylor, 1997).
Outcomes	The changes over time in the welfare and quality of life of service users (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2005).
Partnership Working	“A joint working arrangement where the partners are otherwise independent bodies; agree to co-operate to achieve a common goal; create a new organisational structure or process to achieve this goal” (Audit Commission, 1998).
Procurement / Tendering	“The totality of acquisition starting from the identification of a requirement to the disposal of that requirement at the end of its life. It therefore includes pre-contract activities e.g. sourcing and post contract activities e.g. contract management, supplier relationship management activities. Procurement generally relates to goods, works and service(s) requirements” (The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply , 2010).
Supporting People Programme	The Supporting People Programme provides funding for the delivery of housing support services for vulnerable people who require additional support to remain independent in their communities. Funding is

	provided to Local Authorities who are responsible for commissioning and funding services at a local level (Communities and Local Government, 2007). See Appendix 1 for additional information regarding the Supporting People Programme.
Service User	An individual who is vulnerable and in need of support and/or assistance and who has accessed services funded by the Supporting People Programme
Social Exclusion / Socially Excluded	<p>“This is a term that covers, but is broader than, poverty. It relates to being unable to participate fully in normal social activities, or to engage in political and civic life.”</p> <p>This may be caused by deprivation, poor housing, high unemployment, low incomes and so on. (Improvement and Development Agency, 2010).</p>
Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)	These are key long-term planning documents for improving the quality of life and services in a local area. Every Local Authority is required to produce an SCS, which is developed and agreed with its Local Strategic Partnership.
Voluntary Community Sector Organisation	“Non-governmental, value-driven’ – primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental or cultural objectives rather than profit making.” (Office of the Third Sector, 2006).

1.8 Summary

This chapter provides the foundation for the research through introducing the context to the research question and aims. Background information on the research topic has been discussed and the research justified on academic and organisational grounds. The methodology was briefly overviewed and the structure of the dissertation established. The chapter concluded with definitions of key terms.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an orientation in the literature on partnership working and the VCS. This will enable a full consideration of the research question and to address the first research aim established in Chapter 1.

The chapter begins with an overview of the background to partnership working and the VCS focussing on the policy context. It continues with an outline of the relevant theories and models of partnership working; and explores the influences on partnerships, including the specific nature of partnership working in the VCS. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the conceptual model designed to underpin the research.

2.2 Background and Policy Context

2.2.1 Introduction

This section will review the definitions, policy background and drivers for both partnership working and the VCS.

2.2.2 Definition of partnership working

Theorists appear to concur that partnerships and partnership working are terms which are challenging to define. Writers on the subject have commented that “partnership is such an elusive term that it lacks any real meaning” (Diamond, 2006); “partnership is not well defined and confusion exists about the term” (Wildridge, Childs, Cawthra, & Madge, 2004) and “there is no agreement as to what partnership means” (Brinkerhoff, 2002). In addition, Ling (2000) highlights that a range of terminology is utilised to describe partnership working including collaboration, cooperation, and joint working. However, there is a variance as to whether commentators feel that there are subtle differences between these

terms or whether they can be used interchangeably (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004).

Aligned to the concept of partnerships in the literature is the notion of collaboration, which is described by Snaveley and Tracy (2003) as “the commitment of organisational resources to an initiative involving two or more entities that come together out of recognition that they cannot resolve problems or accomplish their missions alone.”

However, the partnership working definition as stated by the Audit Commission (1998) is identified as the most suitable in the context of this research; “a joint working arrangement where the partners are otherwise independent bodies; agree to co-operate to achieve a common goal; create a new organisational structure or process to achieve this goal.”

2.2.3 Public policy and drivers for partnership working

The policy context for partnership working within the United Kingdom (UK) has been strongly driven by Central Government and the political landscape. The concept of partnership has become central to the UK Government’s approach to tackling complex policy issues commencing in 1997 when the drive for “joined-up central and local government” became a central tenet in Labour’s modernisation agenda (Darlow, Percy-Smith, & Wells, 2007). Many theorists recognise that partnerships have become mandated by Government through a range of initiatives over the last twenty years, for example, through Labour’s urban regeneration policies, partnerships became a requirement to secure funding (Carley, Chapman, Hastings, Kirk, and Young, 2000).

There are also wider political imperatives to combat ‘wicked issues’ and address “fragmented service delivery” through partnership working (Freeman & Peck, 2006). Wicked issues are described as the complex issues inherent in society, for example poverty or crime that requires input by multiple organisations (Wildridge et al, 2004). Partnership working can enable a increased resources between agencies which can lead to more effective interventions and improved service delivery. This indicates a wider range of drivers for partnership working, which is consistent with the acknowledged social drivers of the VCS (see section 2.2.4).

Furthermore, in the UK, partnership has never been so high on the national agenda with the election of the Coalition Government in May 2010. The publication, the Coalition's Programme for Government is littered with the language of partnership, stating "this is an historic document in British politics: the first time in over half a century two parties have come together to put forward a programme for *"partnership government"* (HM Government, 2010a).

In addition, LAs have a central role within the partnership agenda with an emphasis on community leadership or 'place shaping' and therefore a number of interventions to facilitate joined-up local governance have been introduced. For example, Local Strategic Partnerships have been developed with a duty for LAs to co-operate and to involve VCS organisations. These initiatives require LAs to work with partners in developing local solutions to meet the diverse needs of their communities.

Within the current economic climate and pressure on public spending the concept of partnership remains prominent. Going forward, LAs will require new and innovative models of service delivery to achieve the required savings. For example, the Audit Commission (2009) conducted research into how LAs are responding to the economic crisis and identified partnerships as a key theme; with two thirds of councils responding to the challenges of the recession by increased partnership working.

In summarising, the policy context for partnership working within the UK, Dowling et al (2004) plainly state that "partnership is no longer simply an option; it is a requirement." However, in addition, to the clear public policy mandate for partnership working; the literature also identifies a wide range of organisational drivers and benefits to be gained from collaborative arrangements.

Efficiency and making better use of, or increased access to resources is acknowledged as a key partnership driver (Diamond, 2006; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004). For example, a number of grant funding regimes mandate partnerships as an element of the funding criteria. This is likely to be a significant influence on partnerships between VCS organisations who are heavily reliant on grant funding and experience an unstable funding climate. In addition, Lofstrom (2009) identified the lack of resources is the most common

driver for collaboration. In addition, theorists also suggest wider organisational motivations for partnership working. This includes 'organisational identity' (Brinkerhoff, 2002) and achieving the organisation's mission or objectives (Snaveley & Tracey, 2003). In relation to the VCS, the Charities Commission, (2009a) encourage Charitable Organisations to consider partnerships as a method to achieve their objectives, which may include reduced costs, access to funding and an improved skill base.

However, in addition to the literature regarding the drivers and benefits of partnerships, theorists also suggest a note of caution against the evidence base for partnership working. For example, the Social Care Institute for Excellence, (2005) argues that there is limited evidence that partnership working delivers improved outcomes for service users. Furthermore, Rummery (2002) suggests that the lack of evidence for partnership working may be due to issues with criteria to define success (i.e. current measures are not SMART¹), validity and reliability, and a lack of clarity as to what effective partnership means (as cited by Dowling et al, 2004).

2.2.4 Definitions of Voluntary Community Sector

Many authors have recognised the diversity and complexity of the VCS (for example, Taylor, 1997; Kelly, 2007; Alcock, 2009) and as with the definition of partnership working, there is much debate over defining the VCS. The sector is described in numerous and overlapping terms, for example Voluntary Sector, Third Sector, Non-Profit and the Social Economy (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). Paxton, Pearce, Unwin, and Molyneux, (2005) suggest that the challenge with definitions is due to the sector's heterogeneity, which will be explored in Section 2.2.4.

The Economic and Social Research Council, [ESEC] (2009) states that Government's preferred term is the Third Sector, which comprises VCS organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutual organisations. In contrast, Alcock, (2009) argues that the concept of a Third Sector is problematic and contested as it assumes a clear distinction between the 'state' and 'private' sector. However, the diversity of organisational types and

¹ SMART is a recognised term for measuring targets and stands for Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Time-bound

activities and the growth in social enterprises is resulting in progressively blurred boundaries between the sectors, making the overall sector increasingly difficult to define.

The term VCS will be utilised throughout this research as it is consistent with the organisational types included in the primary research. The term is defined by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS)² as “non-governmental, value-driven – primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental or cultural objectives rather than profit making” (OTS, 2006).

2.2.5 Public policy context for Voluntary Community Sector

This section will explore the public policy context for the development of the VCS to establish further the context for the research. It is acknowledged that there is a long and complex history between the state and the VCS, which stretches back to the last century (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2009). More recently, the 1970s witnessed the VCS playing a more prominent role in delivering public services due to the “renewed emphasis on welfare pluralism in the UK” (Buckingham, 2009). However, theorists concur that it was the introduction of ‘New Labour’s Third Way’ politics that cemented the role of the VCS in public service delivery in the 1990s (Kelly, 2007; Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). Alcock (2009) states the development by the Labour Government of ‘a third way’, between the private sector and state, prompted the development of a wide range of service providers, including VCS organisations who became key players in the welfare market.

As the Government continued to modernise public services, increasing levels of competition were introduced to drive efficiency and service improvements and this led to the VCS becoming recognised for providing greater choice to service users and increasingly personalising services (Kelly, 2007). Currently, the VCS plays an increasingly critical role in both the planning and delivery of a mixed economy of public services. Paxton et al (2005) asserts that the sector provides a broad concept of ‘public value’ underpinned with a “sense of being mission-driven, delivering outcomes, trust and legitimacy.”

² The Office of the Third Sector was established in 2006 “in recognition of the increasingly important role which the sector plays in both society and the economy” (Arvidson, 2009)

This is resulting in an expanding sector, although it is acknowledged that there is not a consistent and undisputed data set on the size and shape of the sector (Alcock, 2009). However, the OTS (2009a) estimate that in 2006/07 there were over 137,000 charities in England and 600,000 informal community organisations. In addition, LAs are the most significant source of income for VCS organisations (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2009) providing funding totalling £12 billion during 2006/07, (OTS, 2009a). This included £7.8 billion from contracts and £4.2 billion from grants. Since 2000/01, statutory income from contracts in the UK to the VCS has increased by £4 billion.

This indicates the importance of the relationship with LAs for VCS organisations; which has led to some theorists expressing concern that the sector is losing its identity due to contracting, privatisation and the resultant focus on performance (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006; Kelly, 2007). The ERSC (2009) states that performance management and evaluation are increasingly driving the sector due to the level of Government funding.

However, the sector is likely to undergo a further transformation in forthcoming years with its proposed critical role in delivering the Coalition Government's plans for the 'Big Society.' In October 2010, HM Government published their strategy for VCS organisations, which placed the sector as central to transforming public service delivery and building the civil society vision of the Coalition Government (HM Government, 2010b). However, despite its increasingly prominent role in the policy context, commentators have also issued a note of caution in relation to the aspirational nature of these plans and the real imminent threat of funding cuts (Cox & Schmuecker, 2010).

2.3 Theoretical Approaches to Partnership Working

2.3.1. Introduction

This section will consider some of the established theoretical approaches to partnership working and collaboration and will assess their applicability to this research.

2.3.2 Corporate Strategy Models

In reviewing the literature surrounding partnership working, some of the earliest theories arise from the corporate strategy arena and the concept of collaborative advantage and strategic alliances. Within the private sector, collaboration is recognised as an alternative business strategy to competition, whereby competitive advantage is achieved through “strategic alliances” with other organisations (Johnson & Scholes, 2002). Das and Teng, (2002) define strategic alliances as “inter-firm cooperative arrangements aimed at achieving the strategic objectives of partners.” For profit-making organisations, strategic objectives could include lower transaction costs or the increased ability to enter into new markets. (Johnson & Scholes, 2002).

Foster and Meinhard, (2002) suggest that the two key theories that explain strategic alliances and the conditions for collaboration are ‘Transaction Cost Theory’ (Williamson, 1975, 1985, 1991) and ‘Resource Dependency Theory’. Transaction Cost Theory suggests efficiency and the need to lower transaction costs are the key drivers for collaboration (Foster & Meinhard, 2002). According to this theory, inter-firm alliances occur because they provide an opportunity to reduce transaction costs thereby maximising profit. Whilst this theory may explain motivations for collaboration in the business sector it does not adequately explain partnerships within the VCS given that institutionally the sector is non-profit making and is driven by the “public good”. Although, Buckingham (2009) does acknowledge that the drive for efficiencies is felt consistently across all sectors and this can encourage “the creation of alliances.”

However, the second theory, Resource Dependency Theory may have greater applicability to the VCS as it suggests that organisations will seek collaboration to acquire the necessary resources to survive and obtain competitive advantage in an uncertain climate (Foster & Meinhard, 2002). Environmental uncertainty becomes a driver for partnerships as organisations seek to reduce uncertainty and manage dependencies through collaboration (Pietroburgo & Wernet, 2004). Guo and Acar, (2005) argue that this is an appropriate theory to explain collaboration within the VCS as it suggests that organisations with fewer sources, or those small in size will be more inclined to work in partnership.

Foster and Meinhard, (2002) support this stance suggesting that VCS organisations are more likely to collaborate due to the uncertain funding environment as partnerships support organisations to acquire critical resources and reduce uncertainty. Given the issues that VCS organisations face in securing resources and the dynamic and fluid environment in which they operate, this theory may explain partnership working within the sector. However, the model would also suggest that larger organisations or those with greater ‘resource sufficiency’ will be less inclined to collaboration. Yet; the research into the policy context for partnership working and the societal drivers (i.e. tackling the ‘wicked issues’) are potentially applicable to all sizes of VCS organisations.

2.3.3 Life Cycle and Stage Theories

A second theoretical branch of partnership working is the concept of ‘life cycle models’ which describe partnerships as a process, whereby partnerships evolve through a series of stages (Wildridge et al, 2004). Therefore, a number of examples of partnership life cycle models have been developed which have a high degree of commonality and examples of these will be explored below.

One of the most established models is Wilson and Charlton’s (1997) Five Stage Model, outlined in Figure 2.1. This model is generally applicable to all sectors including the VCS; however it does focus on formal partnerships and presumes that all partnerships need to move through every stage in order to be effective.

Figure 2.1: Wilson and Charlton (1997)

There are a number of similar models, which have evolved from this approach, for example, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) argued for a four stage process with increasing structure and formality as the cycle progresses. However, in contrast to the model outlined above they also highlight some of the risks or costs associated with progressing through the model. For example, they suggest that moving into the mid-stages of more structured partnerships (Stage 2 – 3 in Wilson and Charlton model) can lead to decreased flexibility and motivation. In addition, they argue that the stages of formal delivery (Stage 4 in Wilson and Charlton model) tend to be marked by the introduction of contracts, which therefore increases competition and lowers levels of natural co-operation (as cited by Lester, Birchwood, Tait, Shah, England, & Smith, 2008).

Finally, research into the partnership cycle within VCS partnerships was conducted by Osborne and Murray, (2000) who identified that where VCS organisations had already established relationships, for example through forums this provided an initial foundation of trust which enabled the early stages (i.e. preliminary context) of development. This early level of trust facilitated the negotiating stage and made the collaborative effort easier. However, the research also identified some barriers including significant facilitation time, which was required to negotiate organisational boundaries. Furthermore, if the partnership failed at this stage they found it later led to greater competition between the agencies.

2.3.4 Behaviour Based Models

A number of theories have been developed which explains partnerships based on organisational behaviour. This determines the nature of the partnership and this section will explore two of these models.

The first model is Whole Systems Working Theory which utilises the metaphor of the living system to explain organisations working in partnership with every organisation playing their part in the system as a whole (Pratt et al, 2005). This theory stresses the role of formal and informal communication in feedback loops, shared meaning and purpose and partners with similar values and organisational ethos working together.

In this model, Pratt et al (2005) introduces four types of partnership based on a set of different behaviours required to achieve the partnership's purpose. The typology of partnerships are categorised on two axis with the vertical axis being low to high predictability; and the horizontal axis relates to individual to collective goals.

This is summarised in Figure 2.2

Figure 2.2: Pratt, Gordon & Plambling (2005)

Within this model, the descriptors underlying the four types of partnerships are:

Table 2.1: Pratt, Gordon, & Plamping, (2005).

Category	Descriptors
Competition	Clear goals which all partners know how to achieve; uncomplicated form of partnership behaviour and competition is simple to sustain; requires no agreement or communication between parties and provides certainty.
Co-operation	Occurs where organisations are operating to individual goals; however, there is potential for partners to see their futures as linked; therefore the actors involved attempt to seek a 'win: win.'
Co-ordination	Describes most operational partnerships where there is a collective goal and common objectives; however, the solutions tend to

	predictable and are based on previous solutions. The drivers are in relation to reducing duplication, pooling resources or service improvement; the core business of partners is unaffected.
Co-evolution	High degree of uncertainty, and goals are not clearly defined, however they are shared. This is an unpredictable form of partnership operating over a longer time frame, where organisations are committed to working together for a shared purpose and discovering what works. Relationship building, co-design, and shared problem solving typify partnership behaviour. Sufficient time and resources are required to explore fully problems and solutions.

An alternative model based on similar principles is proposed by Mattesich and Monsey, (1992) who also defines partnership behaviour as described in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Mattesich & Monsey, (1992).

Category	Characeristics
Co-operation	Informal relationships; information is shared as required; lack of agreed structures or mission; each organisation maintains seperate identity and authority; low-risk as both resources and rewards are retained by individual organisations.
Co-ordination	Relationships are more formal and there exists an “understanding of compatible missions.” Channels of communication are agreed and established; with scheduling and division of roles and responsibilities. Each organisation maintians their own authority; however there is a higher degree of risk to all partners as resources are available to all and “rewards are mutually acknowledged.”
Collaboration	This establishes individual organisations into a new agreed structure with complete commitment to a shared mission. This is based on a long-lasting relationships with multi-layered planning and communication channels across numerous levels. Each organisation contributes its own resources which are pooled or jointly secured.

	Authority is agreed within the collaborative structures and rewards are shared; however the risk is much greater, including risk to reputation.
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The above models attempt to define different forms of partnerships as distinguished by behaviour; however some issues can be identified with the models in applying it to this research. Firstly, the role of the external environment and its influence on partnerships is not considered; however as explored in Section 2.2.3; the policy context and external environment play a significant role in defining partnerships. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the various categories of partnerships can operate on an continuum whereby partnerships can evolve across the typology; for example moving from co-operation into co-evolution.

2.4 Influencers of Partnership Working

2.4.1 Introduction

Partnerships can be challenging and are not without risk and therefore significant research has been undertaken to understand the ‘preconditions’ that need to be achieved for a partnership to succeed (for example, Coulson, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Therefore, this section will summarise a review of the literature regarding the influences of partnership working.

2.4.2 Critical Success Factors

One of the most comprehensive reviews of the influences of partnership working is Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey, (2001) who identified twenty Critical Success Factors (CSF), grouped into six categories (as cited by Wildridge et al, 2004), outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Critical Success Factors in partnership working

Categories	Critical Success Factors
Environment	History of collaboration / co-operation; collaborative group

	seen as a legitimate leader; favourable political and social climate.
Membership	Mutual respect, understanding and trust; appropriate membership; members see collaboration as in their self-interest; ability to compromise.
Process and structure	Members have a shared stake; multiple layers of participation; flexibility; clear roles and policy guidelines; appropriate pace of development.
Communication	Open and frequent communication; informal relationships and informal communication.
Purpose	Shared vision; concrete, attainable goals and objectives; shared vision; unique purpose.
Resources	Sufficient resources – including funds, staff, materials and time; skilled leadership.

These categories will now be explored in more detail and their applicability to the VCS considered.

There is a significant body of research which supports the first category of influences, which is ‘environment’. Both Osborne (1996) and Diamond, (2006) stress that the local environment in terms of the relevant social, economic and political issues have a significant impact on partnership working. A conducive external environment has a powerful influence on encouraging partnership working and the features of such an environment would include, a favourable financial climate, suitable structures, political support (Dowling et al, 2004) and supportive government policy (Snively & Tracy, 2003). For VCS organisations it is acknowledged that their operating environment is complex and dynamic, further affecting partnerships (Scott & Russell, 2005). However, Dhillon (2005) cautions that policy drivers alone are not sufficient to maintain collaboration as it is social relationships between partners which sustains partnerships on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, if the partnership is purely policy driven it is likely that the internal drivers for collaboration will be weak (Wistow, 2005).

Huxham and Vangen, (2000) stress that the partnership membership is a significant factor in gaining collaborative advantage as recognised in Table 2.3 by Mattessich et al. This model focuses on the interpersonal aspects of membership such as trust, mutual respect, understanding and compromise, in addition to ensuring the appropriate members are involved. This supports the view of a number of researchers who identify that building trust and positive interpersonal relationships are key in building effective partnerships (Audit Commission, 1998; Snaveley & Tracy, 2003; Shaw, 2003). It is also acknowledged that developing trust requires time and can only emerge out of a “process of engagement” to actively build trust such as risk taking, mutual support and a willingness to share resources (Snaveley & Tracey, 2003).

However, other theorists point to the partnership process itself as hindering the development of trusting relationships due to bureaucracy and an over reliance on contracts which can have a long-term negative impact on partnerships (Southern, 2002; McMurray, 2007).

Mattessich et al’s (2001) third classification relates to effective partnership structures and processes. An effective partnership structure that allows participation by members in clear, fair and transparent process is critical in the success of partnership working (Carley et al, 2000; Huxham & Vangen 2000). Furthermore, structures should provide a balance between effectiveness and flexibility. Carley et al (2000) based on research into regeneration partnerships observed a range of operational structures; however, there was a lack of evidence that one is preferable to another.

However, Huxham and Vangen (2000) argue that structures surrounding partnerships are often “complex and ambiguous both in membership and status,” stating that in practice, members are often unclear on their role and the nature of representation. Difficulties with complex structures can be particularly applicable to the VCS where organisations and individuals can be involved in multiple partnerships resulting in “hierarchies of collaboration” (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). In addition, structures are dynamic and consistently evolving due to changing membership and the external environment.

The need for “open and frequent; communication; informal relationships and communication” is also recognised by Mattessich et al’s (2001). Shaw, (2003) supports this stating that the characteristics of successful partnerships include both formal and informal mechanisms for communication and information sharing and strong interpersonal relationships. This contributes to trust and flexibility between partners. This category also acknowledges the importance of interpersonal relationships, which is reinforced by Tsasis, (2009) who researched partnership working in the VCS and found that “socially positive interpersonal ties” were a significant predictor of successful partnerships. It was also found that relationships tend to be established on the personal attributes, attitudes, and positive behaviors of individual members.

Mattessich et al (2001) also identified the role of purpose, a shared vision, goals and objectives in their penultimate category of influences. A number of theorists echo this finding and concur that effective partnerships require a clear set of aims and objectives and a shared mission and agenda (Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Shaw, 2003; Lester et al, 2008). Furthermore, Huxham and Vangen (1996) suggest that partnership goals are more likely to be achievable if they are task-orientated. Conversely Huxham and Vangen (2000) identified that ‘collaborative inertia’ can be caused by difficulties in agreeing goals and the existence of covert agendas.

The literature also acknowledges that successful partnerships tend to be beneficial to all partners (Wistow, 2005; Lester et al, 2008). Within partnerships across VCS organisations, complementary goals were identified as supporting the development of a shared ideology and common values (Tsasis, 2009). This may be particularly relevant to VCS organisations as one of the sectors defining characteristics is being “mission-driven” (Paxton et al, 2005).

The final category in the framework of CSF for partnership working is that of resources, which is considered in its widest sense within the literature, including funding, staffing, time and energy. However, research into the impact of resources on partnerships tends to focus on the impact of having insufficient resources; rather than the positive impact of ample resources. Lester et al (2008) and McMurray (2007) identified that short-term funding and insufficient resources are a key barrier in sustaining partnerships. Furthermore,

Mattessich et al's (2001) original research identified that partnerships are often 'under-resourced' with a lack of understanding of the costs involved in partnership working.

In addition, a number of theorists also concur that partnerships require significant time, determination and energy (Rowe, 2006; Boydell & Rugkåsa, 2007). This can be particularly challenging for VCS organisations who are often small agencies and therefore the costs in terms of time and resources required to maintain partnerships can outweigh the benefits (Lester et al, 2008). For example, Wistow, (2005) in researching VCS organisations identified that resource issues negatively affected partnerships due to short-term funding creating uncertainty and inequalities in staff terms and conditions across organisations.

2.4.3 Barriers to Partnership Working

Mattessich et al (2001) and other theorists have also identified a range of barriers, which includes both cultural and operational issues which can negatively affect partnerships. Huxham and Vangen, (2000) observe that "many partnerships do not get near to achieving collaborative advantage" which can be caused by organisational incompatibility due to differing cultures, aims or power inequalities. Theorists concur that major differences in culture and ideology across partner agencies can also be a significant barrier (Wistow, 2005; Mattessich et al, 2001; Darlow et al, 2005). For example, the Charities Commission, (2009a) suggest that collaboration between Charitable Organisations often fails when cultural clashes are present. For VCS organisations, ideological dissimilarities across partnerships may manifest in differences in understanding and responding to the needs of service users or communities (Lester et al, 2008).

A further key barrier identified within the literature is in relation to differences in organisational structures and process across partnerships. Darlow et al (2007) suggests that "structural issues" often exist in partnerships, which acts as barriers to developing more joined up approaches. Operationally, this could include incompatible internal structures, different lines of accountability and internal procedures resulting in difficulties with joint operating methods and decision-making (Mattessich et al, 2001; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Integrated Care Networks, 2010). Furthermore, this can lead to challenges with

performance management and information sharing due to practical issues such as different performance measures and monitoring regimes (Audit Commission, 1998; Integrated Care Networks, 2010). The potential outcome of these issues is summarised by the Charities Commission (2009) who state, “these barriers can mean that partnerships spend more time working on the process of partnership rather than outcomes.”

In addition, research also identifies significant issues of power and inequality between partners as a challenge to partnerships (Mattessich et al, 2001; Greasley et al, 2008; Rowe, 2006). Balloch and Taylor (2007) observe that “power relations play a key role in building partnerships as there needs to be a balance of power between organisations.” Therefore, actual or perceived imbalances in power between partner organisations negatively impacts on trust resulting in a barrier to collaboration (Mayo & Taylor, 2001). Influences of power imbalances are apparent across all sectors and can manifest in terms of the most powerful partners setting the agenda and time-scales for the partnership (Mayo & Taylor, 2001).

Finally, as previously discussed, the literature stresses the positive impact of strong interpersonal relationships on partnerships. However it is also acknowledged that challenging issues between individuals will result in a negative impact on partnerships. For example, Mattessich et al (2001) identified that a history of antagonism and conflict between individuals or previous failed attempts at working together can be a barrier to partnership working.

Furthermore, the Charities Commission, (2009) state that “collaboration often fails due to personal issues”, which includes personality clashes between individuals. In addition, Mattessich et al (2001) acknowledged that there are often issues with a lack of individual commitment within partnerships, which can lead to partnerships becoming “talking shops” and results in a lack of actual delivery.

2.5 Partnership Working within Voluntary Community Sector

The literature review will conclude with a brief consideration of the issues impacting partnership working within the VCS specifically, which have not been fully explored above.

As previously acknowledged the concept of partnership working is becoming more accepted and established within the sector (Guo & Acar, 2005; Foster & Meinhard, 2002). Guo and Acar (2005) argue that within the VCS informal arrangements are more common than formal partnership structures and they emphasise the social aspects of partnerships. Operationally, they argue that VCS organisations are embedded in a wide variety of networks, which provide increased opportunities for collaboration. These arrangements allow trust and natural linkages to develop between VCS organisations, which have the potential to lead to more formal partnerships.

Conversely Foster and Meinhard (2002) observe that VCS organisations are exploring increasingly formalised arrangements; influenced by three key drivers, organisational characteristics, the external environment and the organisational attitudes to partnerships and competition. Firstly, they state that the internal characteristics of a VCS organisation will determine the formality of its partnerships. For example, organisations with less formal internal structures will have a greater predisposition to collaborate because their internal structure is collective. Secondly, the external environment is a significant factor for VCS organisations with organisations increasingly seeking partnerships due to reducing resources and uncertainty, which is consistent with the Resource Dependency Theory. Finally, organisational attitudes are also a key driver, for example the more a partnership benefits the organisation; the more likely they are to collaborate in future.

However, Paxton et al (2005) stresses that each VCS organisation has its own operating environment and therefore suggests that the drivers for partnership working are not universal and are specific to each organisation. In contrast, Pietroburgo and Wernet, (2004) argue that VCS organisations are operating in a “volatile” environment and they are strongly affected by external policy and the funding context which also affects partnership working. Although, there is limited research into partnership working in the VCS, the theme of resources and funding is a common theme in the existing literature, which suggests that it will be a key influence.

In relation to resources, the Improvement and Development Agency, (2009) observe that the VCS has undergone a funding shift from grants to a commissioning, tendering and

contracting culture. This has resulted in increased opportunities for innovative and flexible approaches to service delivery. Hardwick, (2009) recognises that tendering can provide increased opportunities for VCS organisations to work in partnership, for example through consortia or sub-contracting. As LAs increasingly seek greater efficiencies from the VCS due to the pressure on public resources; consortia and sub-contracting arrangements are one method to achieve this, as they offer opportunities for sharing of ‘back office costs’ and the reduction of overheads (OTS, 2009b).

However, there are also recognised barriers within these partnership models for VCS organisations, such as the need for significant development time and differing organisational values and cultures, which can lead to tension. Furthermore, the OTS (2009b) acknowledges that the development, tendering and contract delivery phases may actually increase management costs for the organisations. In addition, Wistow (2005) identified that partnerships, which are purely resources-driven, tend to be less successful.

Finally, procurement has also introduced the notion of competition to the VCS (Hardwick, 2009). An example of the introduction of cross-cutting commissioning and tendering and its impact on VCS organisations can be observed in the SP Programme (see Chapter 1 and Appendix 1). Buckingham, (2009) observes that the commencement of whole-scale procurement in the SP Programme has exposed many VCS organisations to market conditions and competition for the first time. This has had a significant impact on relationships between VCS organisations, which has resulted in partners becoming competitors, introducing tensions between the need to compete for contracts against the need to co-operate to provide high-quality services to vulnerable people. As the concept of competition in the VCS sector is a recent phenomenon the true impact on inter-organisational relationships is not yet known; however early research indicates that it is undermining trust, open communication and long-established relationships (Lester et al, 2008; Buckingham, 2009).

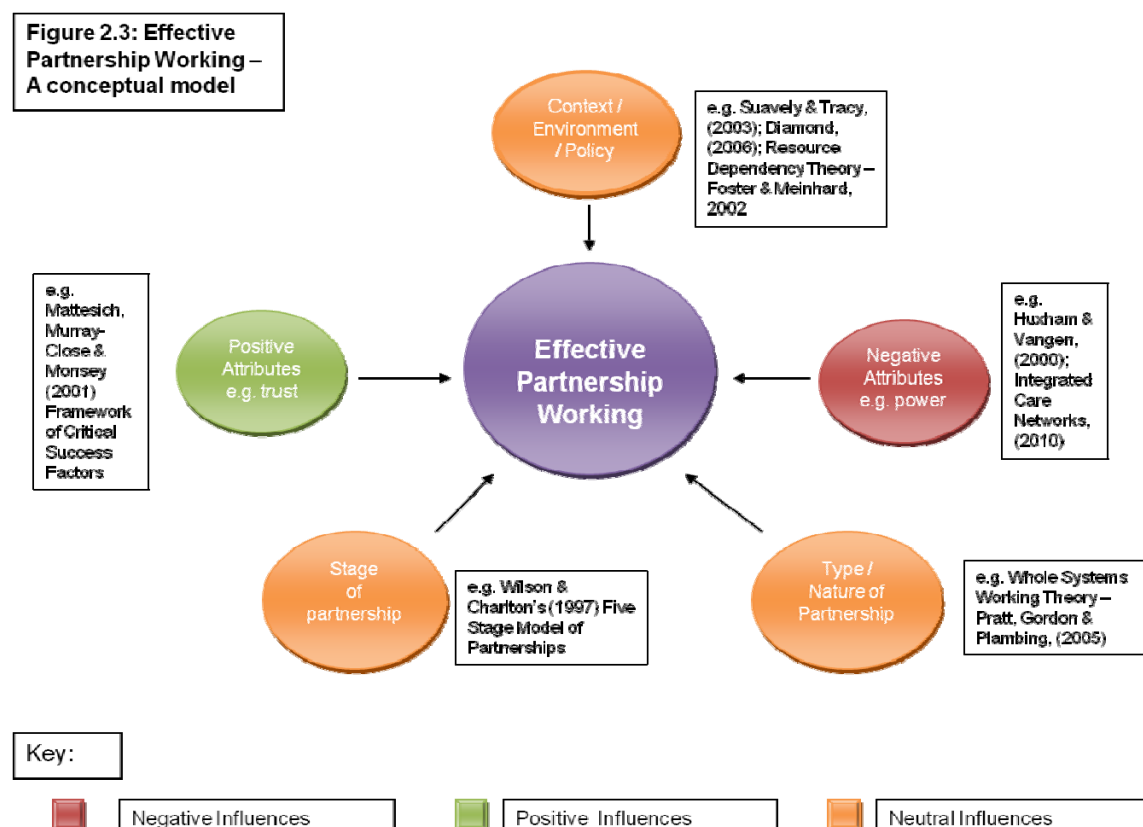
2.6 Conceptual Model

This section introduces the conceptual model, which provides a foundation for the primary research and resultant findings. The model is based on distilling the key areas from the literature review.

In relation to partnership working, the literature review has identified that:

- the external environment including public policy, funding and political context exerts a significant influence on partnership working
- partnerships evolve through stages in their development; and each stage is typified by different characteristics (e.g. Wilson and Charlton's Five Stage Model, 1997)
- a range of partnership types are available to organisations which are distinguished by specific features and behaviours (e.g. Pratt et al's Whole Systems Working, 2005)
- there are a wide diversity of 'factors' or 'influences' both positive and negative which influence the effectiveness of partnerships

This is summarised in the Figure 2.3.



Within the model, the policy and external environment, stage and nature of partnership are identified as neutral. That is, these areas are innately neither positive nor negative influences; rather it is the specific context, which determines their influence. The conceptual model will support the consideration of the research findings and implications outlined in Chapter 5.

A full breakdown of the key factors identified from a review of published case studies of partnership working across a range of sectors is contained in Appendix 2.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has outlined and discussed the literature on partnership working and the VCS. It commenced with definitions and policy context on both partnership working and the VCS. Theoretical models of partnerships were also introduced and behaviour-based theories such as Whole Systems Working were explored. Specific influences on partnerships were considered including the nature of partnership working in the VCS. The chapter concluded with an introduction to the conceptual model developed to underpin the research.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the adopted research strategy to examine the research question outlined in Chapter 1 and to test the conceptual model described in Chapter 2.

The chapter commences with an explanation of the philosophy underpinning the research. The research strategy and design of the research instrument utilised to test the research problem are also described, including a description of the procedures employed. The chapter concludes with a consideration of ethical issues associated with the research.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The philosophy underpinning a research project is fundamental as it provides a contextual framework to understand the research and it clearly communicates the stance of the researcher (Burke, 2007). Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that “questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation” (as cited by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

This highlights the importance of researchers being aware of and clearly articulating their paradigm as the basis for their research including an understanding of their values, judgments and frames of reference in relation to the research topic. The role of values is particularly relevant when researching the VCS, as Scott and Russell (2005) acknowledge that research cannot be “value free” and the VCS is highly political and value driven.

There are a number of research perspectives available to the researcher, and this includes the functionalist or positivist paradigm which is based on a logical and rational view of the world, where facts are easily defined and the results are measurable (Burke, 2007). This paradigm was rejected as the foundation for this research as it does not recognise the value of context, which is a key factor when researching partnership working.

Therefore, the research paradigm adopted will be an “interpretivist or phenomenological” approach which is based on the belief that an objective reality does not exist but that reality is “socially constructed” (Fisher, 2002). This paradigm emphasis pluralism and complexity and is concerned with understanding and interpreting the world (Burke, 2007). The interpretivist approach is also consistent with the ontological view of the researcher, who believes that the experience of partnership working is subjective, defined by the individuals involved and will change depending on the context. On this basis, the research will proceed taking into account the underpinning research paradigm.

3.3 Research Strategy

3.3.1 Justification for selected paradigm and methodology

As stated above, the interpretivist paradigm is identified as the most relevant for this research; therefore, it is imperative that the research approach and strategy is consistent with the paradigm adopted.

There are two key methodological research approaches available to the researcher, the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach although as Silverman (2010) argues there is no clear distinction between both approaches. Methodology is described as a “general approach to studying research topics” (Silverman, 2010) and the qualitative approach has been identified for this research. This seeks to understand meaning, context, relationships and experiences focussing on non-numerical data collection. Therefore, it is consistent with the adopted paradigm. Furthermore, it is recognised as being valuable in exploring social contexts; and has particular value in researching the VCS where it can offer insights and access into the organisational detail and complexity of VCS organisations (Alcock & Scott, 2005).

In addition, the research strategy adopted is a case study strategy, which is a “powerful tool” in business and management research (Gummesson, 2000). Yin (2003) defines the case study strategy as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between object of study and context are not clearly evident.” Yin is the acknowledged leading theorist in the case study

field; and argued that case studies can contribute towards knowledge of social or organisational phenomena.

However, there is also support arguing for the use of the case study strategy to research VCS organisations. For example, Scott and Russell (2005) assert that case studies of VCS organisations can demonstrate the “dynamics of social and organisational relationships.” It allows findings to be located within wider political and economic contexts, which was identified as a key issue for partnership working within the literature review.

Practically, for this research project five Liverpool-based VCS organisations were identified using an appropriate sampling strategy (see section 3.5.1). Multiple case studies were also chosen to improve the ability of generalising from the findings and to improve triangulation, as recommended by Yin (2003).

3.3.2 Limitations of the methodology

There are a number of well documented limitations to the case study methodology. Gummesson (2003) highlights issues including the lack of statistical reliability and concerns regarding the validity and reliability of data generated through case studies. Issues of reliability can be caused by the potential disclosure of sensitive data and how organisations wish to portray themselves, which can lead to respondents censoring the data, (Alcock & Scott, 2005). The researcher sought to address this during this research through developing clear guidelines regarding confidentiality and data protection to reassure the respondents and their organisations thereby encouraging trust and openness.

Case study research is also recognised as being limited in making generalisations from the findings (Gummesson, 2003). The issue of generalisability is also emphasised by Scott and Russell (2005) who state that it is “misguided to extrapolate from the conclusions of case study research due to focus on only a small number of cases.” This is a relevant concern for this research, as due to limited time and resources only five VCS organisations were researched.

In addition, Scott, and Russell (2005) point to other areas of concern in relation to case study research regarding the manageability and rigour of the data analysis. This refers to the complexity of data that can be generated from case study research and how the data can be conceptualised and robustly analysed. This can be addressed by having a clear understanding of the analytic themes at the centre of the research which can guide the researcher through the data analysis (Scott & Russell, 2001). Therefore, the researcher utilised a strong understanding of the literature to inform the research instrument (see section 3.4.1) and the data analysis.

3.3.3 Rejected methods

Despite, the limitations of case study research outlined above, the researcher believes it is the most appropriate method for the research topic and a quantitative approach was rejected. It is likely that a quantitative approach would not generate the understanding of context, impacts and politics of partnership working within VCS which is described as significant within the literature. Arvidson, (2009) supports this stance, asserting that quantitative research is unable to provide a holistic view of VCS organisations and it can overlook complexities.

In relation to specific methods, the researcher rejected questionnaires or surveys, as it was felt that the individual experiences and influences of partnership working such as trust could not be adequately examined through that method. However, the restrictions of time and resources also resulted in the rejection of a full ethnographical approach.

3.4 Research Design

This section will describe the design of the research; that is the methods or techniques utilised to generate and collect the data. Silverman, (2010) stresses the need to ensure that the choice of method reflects the overall research strategy and problem. Therefore, to ensure congruence with the research paradigm and strategy, the research is designed utilising in-depth semi-structured interviews. Also, the researcher conducted a limited amount of documentary research, which Saunders et al (2009) argues can provide a useful

source of data to partially answer research objectives as it provides information on the wider context being studied.

3.4.1 Design of Instrument

In designing the research instrument, a range of interview methods ranging from structured approaches such as pre-coded surveys to non-directive unstructured interviews were considered (Fisher, 2002). The method chosen for this research was semi-structured interviews, which are the most common type of interview used in social research (Dawson, 2007). This method has the potential to generate comprehensive data, including specific insights and meanings, which are critical within the interpretivist approach (Saunders et al, 2009). However, Silverman (2010) cautions that the manner in which the interview is conducted will impact on the data collected; therefore the interviewer needs to be aware of their behaviour to reduce any biases on the way respondents react. In summary, Silverman (2010) argues that interviews can have a high level of reliability but there are issues of generalisability.

A research instrument was constructed to answer the research question. Areas were identified from the literature review to ensure the instrument had a strong theoretical basis and these were converted into open questions to facilitate the flow of the interview and to generate rich data. Appendix 3 describes the questions utilised during the interviews, the research aim that they addressed and the aetiology of the questions from the literature review. This is summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Research Instrument Design from Literature Review

Research Aim Two: To understand the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool	
Question	Origin from literature review
Can you tell me a little about yourself, organisation, and the type of services you deliver?	This supports the interpretivist research paradigm and case study research strategy which requires the researcher to understand the reality of the object of

	enquiry. Also, Paxton et al (2005) stresses that the operating environment and context will be specific to each VCS organisation and therefore it is imperative to understand the organisation under investigation.
What are the drivers and context for partnership working with other VCS organisations for your organisation?	There are a wide range of both policy and organisational drivers for partnership working; including efficiency and making better use of, resources (Diamond, 2006; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004); improved service delivery (Freeman & Peck; 2006; Wildridge et al, 2004) and national and local policy drivers (Boydell & Rugkåsa, 2007).
What types of partnerships with VCS is your organisation is involved in? Can you give me some examples?	Different partnership types will display different forms of characteristics and therefore it is critical to understand the nature of the Case Study organisations partnerships (e.g. Pratt et al, 2005; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992).
What are the aims or objectives of the partnerships with VCS organisations that you are involved in?	The role of clear aims and objectives are critical to partnerships; e.g., effective partnerships require a clear set of aims and objectives and a shared mission and agenda (Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Shaw, 2003; Lester et al, 2008; Mattessich et al, 2001). Also, difficulties in agreeing goals and existence of covert agendas can lead to 'collaborative inertia' (Huxham & Vangen, 2000).
Have you seen your partnership working with other VCS organisations evolve or change? How? Can you give me an example recently when this has occurred?	Partnerships evolve through a series of phases (e.g. Wilson & Charlton, 1997) therefore, it is important to understand if the Case Study organisations partnerships are evolving / changing. In addition, VCS and their partnership structures are dynamic and constantly evolving (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Scott & Russell, 2005).
How do you measure	The literature acknowledges that the evidence-base of

performance and evaluate success within partnerships with other VCS organisations? How do you know they are effective?	partnerships delivering actual improvements is limited and there are issues regarding evaluation; therefore it was felt important to understand how this issue is currently addressed (SCIE, 2005). Also, the ESRC (2009) stresses the VCS is becoming increasingly driven by performance management and evaluation.
Research Aim Three: To identify factors that influence effective partnership working across VCS organisations in Liverpool	
Question	Origin from literature review
What are the issues that your organisation has experienced in partnership working with other VCS organisations?	The literature identifies that there can be a range of issues or difficulties with partnership working. For example, lack of resources and short term funding (Lester et al, 2008; McMurray, 2007; Mattessich et al's, 2001) and partnerships are also time consuming and require significant time, determination and energy, (Rowe, 2006; Boydell and Rugkåsa, 2007; Lester et al, 2008). Also, the introduction of competition has made partnerships increasingly difficult to manage (Hardwick, 2009). There can also be issues with power, conflict, incompatible cultures, ideology, and structures, which can cause barriers (e.g. Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Darlow et al, 2005; Integrated Care Networks).
Can you explain to me the decision-making and governance within your partnership arrangements with VCS organisations?	Mattessich et al (2001) categories of Critical Success Factors for partnership working include a consideration of processes and structure. For example, effective partnerships structures require clear, fair and transparent processes (Carley et al, 2000; Huxham & Vangen 2000).
Does the external environment and/or policies impact on your partnerships with other VCS	There is a significant body of research which indicates that context and the external environment are fundamental to partnerships and therefore the research

organisations? If so, How? Examples?	sought to explore the impact on VCS organisations (Osborne, 1996; Diamond, 2006; Dowling et al, 2004; Snavelly & Tracy, 2003).
What factors do you think make partnerships with other VCS work? Can you give me an example of successful partnership working with another VCS organisation? What do you think made it successful – why did work?	The literature suggests that partnerships can be challenging and are not without risk and therefore significant research has been undertaken to understand the ‘preconditions’ that need to be achieved for a partnership to succeed (for example, Coulson, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2000). The research sought to understand the positive influences that specifically affect partnerships across the VCS organisations.
What factors do you think make partnerships with other VCS ineffective or fail? Can you give me an example of unsuccessful partnership working with another VCS organisation? What do you think made it unsuccessful – what went wrong?	As above, with a focus on barriers or negative influences.

‘Critical incident questioning’ was included which has a long history in social science and encourages the respondent to think of “real life examples” which they are asked to describe in detail. The technique can facilitate in identifying behaviour, competencies or requirements (Saunders et al, 2009).

The research instrument was grounded in the literature review to increase validity, which can be defined as “the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Silverman, 2010). The researcher undertook appropriate measures throughout all stages of the research to maximise validity. As outlined in section 3.5.1. a planned approach was taken to ‘sampling’ Case Study organisations and the themes of the interview were shared with respondents prior to the interview which is recognised as improving validity and reliability (Saunders et al, 2009). Furthermore, a structured

approach was adopted to data analysis, as outlined in section 3.5.3 to ensure reliable and consistent data coding.

Finally, multiple case studies were chosen to enable triangulation of the results and to increase generalisability (Yin, 2003). Jonsen and Jehn, (2009) describe triangulation as the “combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon.” The purposes of triangulation are to reduce biases, increase the validity, reliability, and comprehensiveness of the research. Respondent validation is the form of triangulation adopted in this research; which is defined as “checking of inferences drawn from one set of data sources by collecting data from others” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, a cross-case analysis of the responses from the semi-structured interviews was undertaken to compare the data relating to same issue consistently across different respondents.

3.5 Research Procedures

This section details how the research methods were employed in practise.

3.5.1 Sampling and Access

This section outlines the approach taken to sampling within the research and addresses issues in relation to access to data and respondents. Saunders et al, (2009) defines a sample as a “sub group or part of a larger population”. Sampling techniques enables confidence about the representativeness of the chosen sample and allows the researcher to make broader inferences (Silverman, 2010).

A pragmatic approach to sampling is encouraged in case study research based on available resources, contacts, ease of access and the scale of project (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and therefore a purposive sampling technique was employed. This enables the researcher to use their own personal judgement and experience to select cases, which will best address the aims of the research. Scott and Russell (2005) support this approach in researching VCS organisations acknowledging that the researcher’s knowledge and established networks are often the “key determinants” in the research approach.

Silverman (2010) states that purposive sampling requires the researcher “think critically about the parameters of the population they are studying and choose sample cases carefully.” Therefore, the researcher was required to identify local VCS organisations which would illustrate the phenomena of partnership working and as far as possible be representative of the wider sector to enable generalisations to be made.

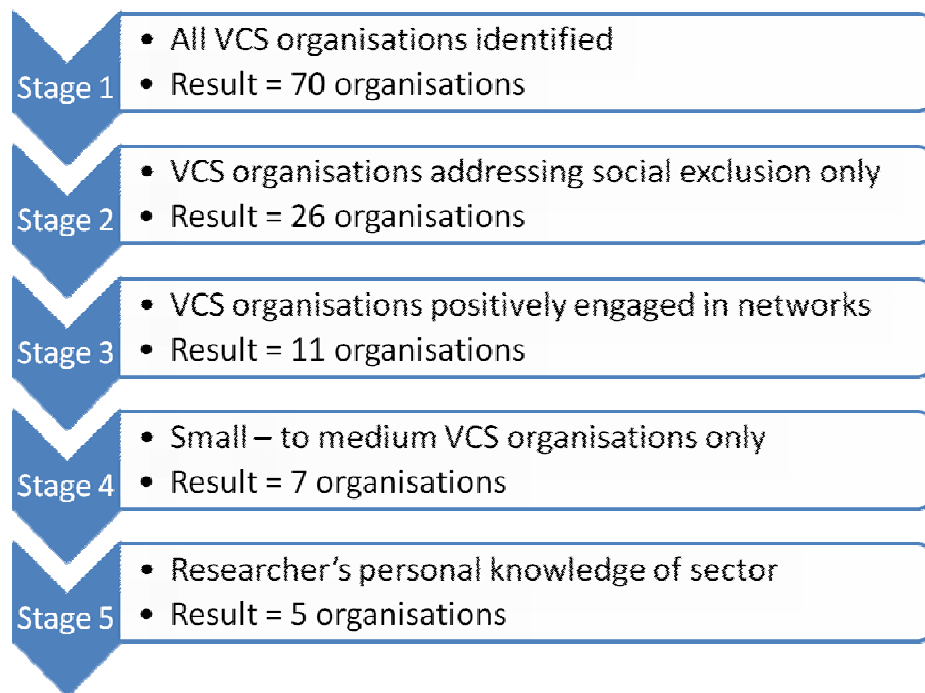
Therefore, the researcher reviewed VCS organisations funded by the SP Programme in Liverpool to identify a suitable sample. The findings from the literature review also informed the sampling process. An initial sift identified a potential population of seventy organisations defined as VCS (LCC, 2010). Therefore, a shortlist was established based on those organisations, which were involved in tackling “social exclusion” (for example, homelessness, domestic violence) which is recognised as one of the key drivers of partnership working. This resulted in the identification of twenty-six VCS organisations.

A review of minutes of local VCS meetings was then undertaken to identify agencies who were engaged in local partnerships. Eleven VCS organisations were identified from this who had attended meetings on more than four occasions during 2009. The size of the organisation was also taken into account as Tsasis, (2009) argues that when researching partnership working in VCS organisations; the research should focus on organisations small enough to identify the importance of collaboration. Therefore, four large³ organisations were removed from the shortlist. From the remaining seven organisations, the final five Case Study organisations were identified using the researcher’s professional knowledge of the organisations most likely to participate and those who would provide rich data. Figure 3.1 summarises the sampling approach.

Following the identification of the sample Case Study organisations, the researcher sought to gain access to the agencies. Gummesson, (2000) defines access as “the opportunities available to find empirical data and information.” This is a difficult area for the researcher, involving both negotiation and ethical issues (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Gummesson, 2000).

³ This is defined as fifty employees based on Improvement and Development Agency (2009a) definitions of VCS organisational size

Figure 3.1: Summary of Sampling Stages and Results



The researcher was keen to interview managers to obtain both a strategic as well as operational view of partnership working. Therefore, the researcher utilised the information obtained from reviewing minutes of meetings to identify the key individual managers from the sampled organisations. The individuals were known to the researcher on a professional basis, however, Silverman, (2010) acknowledges that it is not uncommon for qualitative researchers to use their existing relationships for their research; however this does raise ethical issues which are explored in Section 3.6.

Contact was initially made via email to potential interviewees in February 2010, containing:

- an outline of the research,
- the interview request
- information regarding timescales and predicated length of interview
- an offer of an initial telephone conversation and additional information to allow potential interviewees to consider fully the request.

All participants confirmed their involvement via email. Finally, access to additional secondary data on the Case Study organisations was facilitated by the respondents or obtained from the public domain; for example, the Charity Commission's website.

3.5.2 Administration of Research Instruments

All interviewees were provided with a 'Participant Information and Consent Form', which confirmed the purpose and nature of the research, and addressed issues such as confidentiality and data security (see Appendix 4). These were signed and returned to the researcher and upon receipt; dates were agreed at the participants' convenience to conduct the interviews. The researcher shared interview themes with respondents three days prior to the interview to maximise the generation of data and to improve validity and reliability.

Interviews were held between 26th April and 6th May 2010 using the interview guide and questions outlined in Appendix 5. All interviewees were provided with complete choice in terms of location and all chose their own office. This approach was based on Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) who identified that the location of interviews is important and stated that the preferred location is the respondents own 'territory' as they will be more comfortable in familiar surroundings.

Prior to the interviews commencing the purpose of the research was re-iterated and a final opportunity provided for the interviewees to ask questions. The interviews were audio recorded using a digital MP3 voice recorder with a microphone. All interviewees were informed prior to the interviews that they would be recorded and their permission sought and recorded. The researcher did consider not using audio recording equipment due to the potential impact on interviewee's behaviour; however, this was considered against the risk of losing vital and detailed information, which could not be realistically captured through hand-written notes.

The researcher initially asked respondents some "scene-setting" questions regarding their role and the organisation to gain critical contextual information and to build rapport. The questions asked were mainly open to allow interviewees to fully explore the topics and describe their experiences. Interviews lasted on average 45 minutes. Comprehensive and

professional transcripts were produced, which formed the basis for the data analysis described below.

3.5.3. Data Analysis

This section will outline the approach adopted to analysing the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews. A “general inductive approach” to data analysis was employed which allows research findings to emerge from the frequent and prevailing themes within the raw data (Thomas, 2006). Fundamental to the approach is establishing categories from the raw data, which can be developed into a framework to capture the themes judged important by the researcher.

The analysis began with detailed reading of the raw data in the form of the interview transcripts. This allowed the researcher to become familiar with the material and to identify initial themes. The researcher utilised the data collection tool in Appendix 6, which was aligned to the questions and informed by the literature review and conceptual model. This enabled data coding for each Case Study organisation, which allowed the identification of patterns, commonalities and inconsistencies. As Thomas (2006) recommends, this process was repeated several times with the themes and categories being revised and refined until the raw data was comprehensively coded. The outcome of the data analysis and findings are presented in Chapter 4.

In addition, a second form of data analysis was undertaken to further explore the third research aim.⁴ The researcher sought to undertake ‘factor analysis’ to identify the specific influences of partnership working. This is consistent with research into partnership working identified in the literature review; for example, Mattessich et al’s (2001) research into identifying Critical Success Factors affecting partnerships. Therefore, the researcher:

1. Closely read the transcripts to identify instances where respondents identified specific factors, which they felt influenced partnership working

⁴ The third research aim is “to identify factors that influence effective partnership working across VCS organisations in Liverpool

2. Highlighted the factors in the transcripts and transferred them verbatim to a tabular format organised by Case Study organisation
3. Categorised the factors together in common themes and assigned each theme a 'label,' for example strong interpersonal relationships
4. Coded the factors as positive, negative or neutral
5. Counted the occurrences of each factor throughout the transcripts – this provided an insight into the most common factors or influences on partnerships

Both the labelling and coding (positive, negative or neutral) of the factors was informed by an analysis of published case studies or reviews of partnership working (see Appendix 2). For example, if the literature confirmed that 'building trust' had a positive impact on partnership working, the primary data findings on 'trust' were coded positive. This process completed the data analysis of the primary research.

In summary, the broad data coding categories are as follows:

Categories for data coding
Positive
Negative
Neutral

3.6 Ethical considerations

This section will address the ethical considerations arising from the research methodology. Hammersley and Atkinson, (2007) stress that ethical considerations are imperative; however, they argue that the researcher cannot resolve ethical issues through the application of absolute rules, rather "the researcher needs to act in ways that are ethically appropriate." In addition, Scott, and Russell (2005) comment that conducting case studies requires a high level of "ethical sensitivity" due to the potential for significant levels of information disclosure. Therefore, the researcher followed the principles of ethical research as established by the ERSC, (2010) in the Framework for Research Ethics, outlined in Appendix 7.

The researcher was particularly mindful of ethical issues arising from the fact that the respondents were known professionally to the researcher, raising potential of issues informed consent and conflict of interest; i.e. respondents feeling that they “had to participate.” This was addressed by ensuring that respondents received written information clearly stating the researcher’s role; confirming that their involvement (or non-involvement) and that any information disclosed would in no way affect their relationship with LCC (the researcher’s employer). The respondents were also provided with written information about the research as advocated by Silverman (2010) to enable informed decision-making by participants regarding their involvement (see Appendix 4). Finally, signed consent forms confirming participation, understanding of the research, principles of confidentiality and the right to withdraw were obtained from each respondent.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the approach to the primary research. The interpretivist paradigm was outlined and the case study strategy was described, including reflections on its limitations and a consideration of rejected methods. The qualitative method of semi-structured interviews was explored, including the construction of the research instrument. This was followed by a comprehensive description of research procedures including purposive sampling and a general inductive approach to data analysis. The chapter concluded with an understanding of the ethical issues arising from the research and how these were addressed.

Chapter 4 - Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter fully presents the primary research findings and a limited amount of secondary research will be considered to provide context for the primary data.

However, the core of the chapter will outline the findings from the semi-structured interviews as described in Chapter 3. The findings will be presented via a cross case analysis against the second and third research aims. This chapter will only present the data; it will not draw conclusions or assess implications, as this will be covered in Chapter 5, where the findings are placed within the context of the literature.

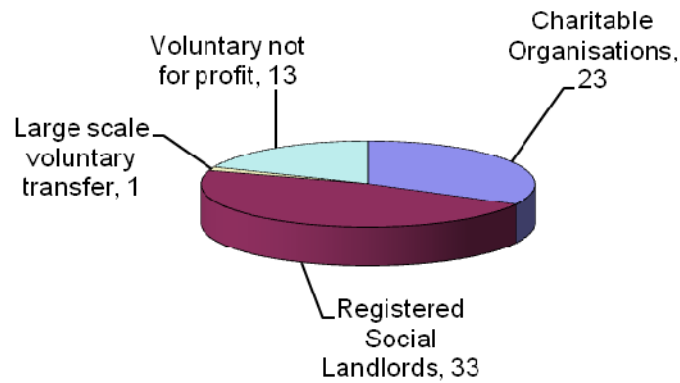
4.2 Secondary data

4.2.1. VCS Organisations funded by Liverpool's Supporting People Programme

To understand the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool, we must first consider the scale and nature of the VCS operating within the SP Programme. Documentary data provided by the SP Programme identified that during 2009/10; 90 individual provider organisations were funded, of which 77% were VCS organisations (LCC, 2010).

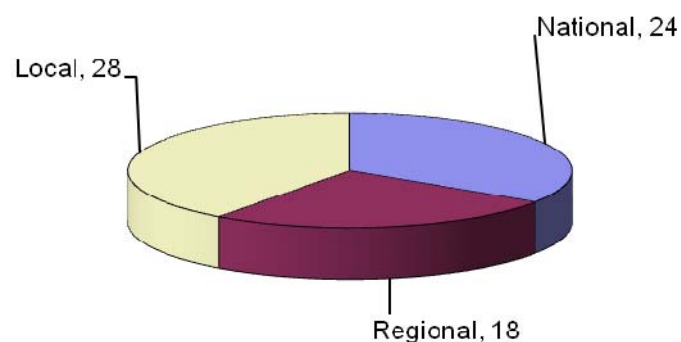
Chart 4.1 outlines the type of VCS organisations; demonstrating that Registered Social Landlords (RSL) are the most common organisational type (Liverpool City Council, 2010).

Chart 4.1 Type of VCS organisations funded by the Supporting People Programme in Liverpool



The total level of funding invested in these organisations by Liverpool's SP Programme is £34.2 million per annum (LCC, 2010) which is consistent with the literature review, which identified the SP Programme, as one of the key funders of VCS organisations (HM Treasury, 2007). In addition, further analysis identifies that there are three key levels of service delivery: national, regional (North West) and local (i.e. Liverpool) within the SP Programme, outlined in Chart 4.2 (Liverpool City Council, 2010).

Chart 4.2: Remit of VCS organisations funded by the Supporting People Programme in Liverpool



Within Liverpool, a wide range of service delivery is identifiable, with VCS organisations delivering over 300 individual services funded by the SP Programme to a range of vulnerable groups (LCC, 2010).

4.3 Analysis of respondents

4.3.1 Introduction

This section will present brief background information on each of the five Case Study organisations, which were identified utilising the sampling strategy outlined in Chapter 3; Section 3.5.1. This information is presented as contextual data for the purposes of understanding the operating environment of the case studies, which is recognised as important in this methodological approach (Saunders et al, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson; 2007). The information presented below has been identified from documentary sources (e.g. Annual Reports), in addition to the introductory data gained from the semi-structured interviews.

4.3.2 Case Study Organisation 1 (CS 1)

CS 1 is a “Voluntary Not Profit” local organisation who has been operating in Liverpool for thirty years. CS 1 describes their organisational aim is to “prevent or address homelessness and to provide opportunities for people to change their lives and to support them to sustain the changes made” (Charities Commission, 2009b).

CS 1 has 75 employees and had an annual income of £1.4 million from the SP Programme for 2009/10 (Charities Commission, 2009b). The organisation provides five services including day centre provision for homeless people, outreach services for rough sleepers, resettlement and support services for a range of vulnerable groups.

4.3.3 Case Study Organisation 2 (CS 2)

CS 2 is a regionally based “Voluntary Not Profit” organisation delivering services to vulnerable adults across the North West (NW). Their organisational mission is “to promote and provide initiatives to advance well-being” (Charities Commission , 2009c).

CS 2 employs 38 individuals, supplemented by 78 volunteers and throughout 2009/10 their organisational income was £1.8 million (Charities Commission, 2009c). In Liverpool, CS 2 provides two services for the SP Programme, which is a supported housing service for families affected by substance misuse and a support service for victims of domestic abuse.

4.3.4 Case Study Organisation (CS 3)

CS 3 is a Liverpool-based Charitable Organisation established since 1846. Their organisational aim is to “be recognised as a leading innovator in developing both positive perceptions and the potential of all vulnerable people” (Charities Commission, 2007).

The organisation has 25 employees and an additional 14 volunteers and CS 3’s organisational income for 2009/10 was £1.2 million. The services delivered in Liverpool for the SP Programme focus on a large supported housing development for homeless people with a range of different needs, including asylum seekers and people with drug and alcohol problems.

4.3.5 Case Study Organisation (CS 4)

CS 4 is a regionally based organisation delivering services within nine LA areas, including Liverpool. It is a Charitable Organisation encompassing a broad area of activity. CS 4 states that their organisational vision is to deliver projects, which contribute, to “a society where all people can live in dignity and can make a positive contribution,” (Charities Commission, 2010).

In Liverpool, CS 4 employs 28.5 people delivering four services funded by the SP Programme with a total income of £1.1 million (LCC, 2010). This provision includes hostel

provision for homeless people, a project, which provides family-style accommodation within the community to homeless teenagers and two domestic violence support services.

4.3.6 Case Study Organisation (CS 5)

CS 5 is a RSL with a number of subsidiaries split across the NW region, including Merseyside. Within Merseyside, the organisation focuses on homes, neighbourhoods and enterprise, owning and managing more than 6,000 properties across Liverpool, Halton, and Sefton. The key mission of the organisation is to “maximise investment in neighbourhoods so that quality of life and opportunity is continually enhanced” (Tenant Services Authority, 2010).

CS 5 has 33 employees delivering support services for vulnerable people in Liverpool and during 2009/10 had an income level of £1.1 million from the SP Programme (LCC, 2010). The organisation delivers six services in Liverpool, including sheltered housing for older people, services for people who are socially excluded such as refugees, young single homeless people, and people who are at risk of homelessness due to Anti Social Behaviour.

4.3.7 Summary

Table 4.1 contains a summary of the Case Study organisations.

Table 4.1 Summary Information on Case Study Organisations

Case Study Organisation	Organisational Type	Remit	No of employees in Liverpool	Income for 2009 / 10
1	Voluntary Not for Profit	Local	39	£1.4 million
2	Voluntary Not for Profit	Regional	38	£1.8 million
3	Charitable	Local	25	£1.2 million

4	Charitable	National	28.5	£1.1 million
5	Registered Social Landlord	Regional	33	£1.1 million

Source: LCC (2010); Charities Commission, (2009b); Charities Commission (2009c); Charities Commission, 2010; Tenant Services Authority, 2010

4.4 Findings for each research question

4.4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the findings based on a cross case analysis of each theme explored through the interviews and provides a summary of the main responses. The findings seek to address the second and third research aims established in Chapter 1 and are presented to enable the identification of common themes or inconsistencies across the five Case Study organisations. A tabular summary of the semi-structured interviews is contained in Appendix 8. Quotations from the interviews are utilised, where appropriate to explore particular points and views.

4.4.2. Findings for second research aim⁵

4.4.2.1 Organisational context and drivers for partnership working

Respondents were asked about the organisational context in relation to partnership working with other VCS organisations in Liverpool and the key themes are outlined in Table 4.2.

⁵The second research aim is “to understand the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool”

Table 4.2: Summary of data findings for organisational context and drivers

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational context is strategic, operational and political • Partnership working is based around needs of service users as one agency cannot meet all their needs • Partnership drivers are service development, co-ordination and improvement; and to increase organisational awareness of change within the sector e.g. the procurement processes and how agencies are viewed
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key driver is meeting the needs of the client group – can only be achieved through working in partnership • Saves funding – too expensive for all services to be delivered through one agency
CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating value for service users and organisation • Funding opportunities facilitate a lot of the partnerships e.g. bidding for a tender, applying for grant • Partnerships are sometimes opportunistic and not strategically driven
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational ethos is to seek partnerships when it is advantageous and beneficial for the organisation • Driven by commissioning policy • Reputation – need to be viewed as an outward facing organisation
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships are developed to meet business objectives • Driven by organisational position in the market (in terms of size, strengths etc). • To enrich the business planning process • Recognises wider strategic context – such as reducing public sector budgets etc

The responses demonstrate different contexts for partnership working across the Case Study organisations containing both strategic and operational dimensions. Three out of five organisations identified meeting the needs of service users as one of the key drivers for

partnership working; as CS 1 stated “one agency can’t meet the diverse needs of an individual single handed as a whole range of services are needed to effectively meet service users needs” (personal communication, April 26th 2010).

In addition, two of the Case Studies clearly linked partnership working to strategic drivers such as the organisational ethos, position, reputation and achieving business objectives. The external environment and policy were also identified by CS organisations 4 and 5 as part of their context for partnership working. The issue of funding was acknowledged as a driver for partnerships for two Case Study organisations; however, the context for these organisations differs with CS 2 seeing partnerships as saving funding; however CS 3 stated that funding opportunities can drive and facilitate partnerships.

4.4.2.2 Nature of partnerships with other VCS organisations

To understand the nature of partnership across VCS organisations in Liverpool, respondents were asked to describe the type (or nature) of their partnerships.

Table 4.3: Summary of data findings for the nature of partnerships

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational partnerships focussing on multi agency responses to service users e.g. Complex Needs Groups • Joint service delivery agreement governed by protocols and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) – e.g. ring fenced beds for rough sleepers • Network groups with other VCS agencies – focussed on information sharing service co-ordination • Currently exploring formal partnerships with other VCS organisations in relation to shared services or tenders – would have legal and financial implications – needs to be thoroughly risk appraised
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational arrangements focussed on service delivery to deliver improved outcomes for service users

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks groups – focussed on sharing information / practise • Joint service delivery – working with another agency to deliver a service / contract
CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational level aimed at service users and meeting their needs • Strategy development – working with other VCS organisations across region to develop strategies / common approaches • Joint service delivery with agreements and protocols – e.g. SLAs with local VCS agencies to provide emergency access for service users
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational level – service delivery (aimed at better outcomes for service users) e.g. co-ordinating multi-agency working in CS 4's supported housing service • Networks to provide a voice for the Voluntary Sector and information sharing • Joint service delivery arrangements which are governed by SLAs or protocols • Developing consortia agreements – in principle commitment to work with other VCS organisations to tender for services (where appropriate)
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational agreements focussed on outcomes for service users e.g. nomination agreements with specialist VCS agencies e.g. domestic violence refuge • Networks - wider strategic and operational level contacts aimed at information sharing / good practice • Joint Service Delivery: e.g. managing agent relationships, managed through contracts / SLAs • Undertaking a review of options around consortia – however may present a risk for the organisation

Respondents identified consistent categories of partnership arrangements. All Case Study organisations identified a range of operational partnerships with other VCS organisations, which are aligned to meeting the needs of service users whom they support within their services. Furthermore, all respondents are engaged in partnerships with other VCS organisations, which are described as 'joint service delivery', in which they are working in

partnership to deliver a service. These appear to be more formal arrangements governed by tools such as SLAs, protocols or contracts.

In addition, the majority (four out of five) respondents are also involved in network partnerships aimed at sharing information, service co-ordination and providing a voice for the sector. None of the respondents are formally involved in consortia or similar arrangements; however, CS 1 and 5 did acknowledge that this is currently being explored within their organisations. Furthermore, CS 4 confirmed that the organisation has an ‘in principle’ commitment with a small number of local VCS organisations to work on joint tenders, where it was appropriate for the organisations. There appears to be a reticence from respondents in relation to consortia with concerns being expressed in relation to risk and legal implications.

4.4.2.3 Aims and objectives of partnerships with VCS organisations

The literature review recognised the importance of effective aims and objectives within partnerships and hence this was explored with the Case Study organisations.

Table 4.4: Summary of data findings for the aims and objectives of partnerships

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged the importance of having clear aims and objectives in partnerships - stressed the need to be clear on objectives, roles, benefits and responsibilities of partnerships • Lack of clarity on objectives can lead to partnership being ineffective
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key aim of partnerships is to deliver positive outcomes for service users through holistic services; partnerships can ensure access to other VCS services for service users • Critical to be clear on objectives at start of partnership • Identified that aims and objectives of partnership can change e.g. partnership with one VCS organisation had an objective of generating

	access to additional services and funding for service users; however developed into more strategic service development objectives
CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised importance of clear objectives • Key objective is improving the service to service users • Also objectives have to be in line with the strategic plan of the organisation • Secondary objective of partnerships is to build organisation capacity
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of importance of having defined objectives: identified primary and secondary drivers • Primary - better outcomes for service users • Secondary drivers – link to business objectives i.e. maintaining the delivery of services; learning from other organisations
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked the aims / objectives of partnerships to the business objectives of the organisation • Key driver is better outcomes and improved quality of life for service users • Aims and objectives need to be clarified and agreed at beginning of partnership for it to be effective

In articulating the aims and objectives of their partnerships, once again the majority (four out of five) of respondents identified improved outcomes or meeting the needs of service users as the key aims. This objective was expressed by CS 3 who observed, “partnerships have to be aimed at benefiting service users – as a charity that’s what you are there to do – if you are not doing that you shouldn’t be doing the partnership” (personal communication April 29th, 2010).

In addition, three out of five case studies identified the relationship between the aims and objectives of their partnerships and the objectives of the organisation, in that partnerships need to be in line with the organisational strategy. All respondents recognised the importance clear objectives within effective partnership working; however, CS 2 did acknowledge that the aims and objectives of the partnership could evolve as the nature of the partnership changes.

4.4.2.4 Change in partnership working across VCS organisations

Table 4.5 summarises the key themes in relation to the changing state of partnerships with VCS organisations.

Table 4.5: Summary of data findings for change in partnership working

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – organisation is investing more time in partnerships due to increased emphasis on partnership working within procurement policy • Nature is changing - partnerships becoming more structured – organisation has to see value in partnerships due to limited time / resources (if no value – partnership will not be pursued) • Working with wider range of agencies as VCS more fluid – agencies emerging and withdrawing from sector • Partnerships need to be able to respond to change
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes - both nature and type of partner has changed • Changing needs of service users resulting in need to work with new organisations to meet service users needs • Nature of partnerships have changed linked to funding climate and context is driven by funders • Nature of partnerships has changed - now more outcome-focussed
CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – range of partnerships is becoming broader in terms of type of organisation and nature of activities • Changing needs of service users also requires different partnerships to meet needs • Partnerships are also reflecting the changing broader strategic agenda e.g. current policy focus on health and housing
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes - partnership working is a more natural state for the organisation • Engaging with more diverse range of partners; for example increase in social enterprises

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships are key to maintaining service delivery in current procurement climate
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes – nature of partnerships has changed because of policy / operating environment i.e. the increased focus on procurement policy has led to competitive environment and this has affected ability to share good practise and innovation – put partnerships under strain Procurement has resulted in new partners as its a more dynamic environment

All respondents conveyed that their partnership arrangements are changing and key themes can be ascertained. Firstly, the organisational approach to partnership working is changing for two respondents (CS 1 and 4). CS 4 acknowledged that partnership working was becoming increasingly natural for the organisation and CS 1 believes that the organisation is investing more time in partnerships.

Secondly, all respondents stated that the range of partner organisations is increasing due to changing service user needs (CS 2 and 3) and the dynamic and fluid nature of the sector (CS 1 and 5). Finally, three respondents identified that the nature of partnerships is changing linked to the impact of the external and policy environment on their partnerships, including procurement and reducing resources and funding.

4.4.2.5 Measuring performance and evaluating success

The final area explored to support the second research aim was in relation to measuring performance and the key themes are outlined in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Summary of data findings for measuring performance and evaluation

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating and measuring performance can be a difficult area within partnerships

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be clear on measures and what constitutes success from the start and consequences for non-delivery – requires accountability • Issues with performance within a partnership is an area of risk for the organisation • Where performance management and evaluation had been ineffective within partnerships there has been negative consequences
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged its area difficult – can cause tension • Organisation utilises its own internal performance measures but prefers funders to set targets across partnership – removes the tension • Performance should be linked to outcomes for service users • Success should be the achievement of the partnership objectives – therefore you need to be clear about aims and objectives at beginning of partnership
CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management is specified within SLAs with formal performance reporting; and exception reporting • Utilises Key Performance Indicators to measure performance • Address under-performance through learning and reflection • Can be issues within partnerships when it is not clear what each organisation is achieving and can therefore claim outcomes • Success should be evaluated by examining both the outcomes and experience of partnership; e.g. how did deal with conflict
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises that performance management can be challenging in partnerships • Need to be clear on roles; understanding of performance and what constitutes success in beginning of partnerships • Identify if outcomes for service users have been delivered • Success should also include considering the partnership experience and the satisfaction with the relationships
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have a shared understanding of performance management based on trust, understanding and clarity • Measures should focus on outcomes for service users

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to quantify success as partnerships at different stages – success can be long term e.g. regeneration • Acknowledged that it is challenging where there are multiple partners and investment cannot link in linear relationships to the outcome • Cautious about using just formal measures for evaluation - the relationship created is equally important - can lead to future opportunities and this can constitute success
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All of the respondents appeared to identify that this is a difficult and challenging area and one that can lead to tension. Four of the Case Studies identified the importance of clarity, accountability, having a shared understanding of objectives and performance indicators at the commencement of the partnership and three respondents stressed the need to equate success or performance with outcomes for service users.

However, two respondents also distinguished the experience of the partnership as important in evaluating success. This included a consideration of how the partnership addresses conflict and the quality of interpersonal relationships, as summarised by CS 4 “in this sector, we are not just interested in statistics ... we are much more interested in the human side of things. It is relationship driven, rather than facts and figures driven” (personal communication, May 5th, 2010).

A range of issues were identified as contributing to the complexity of this area, including the difficulty of measuring effectiveness in long-term partnerships, for example regeneration partnerships and the challenge of aligning the achievements or outcomes to an individual partner agency.

4.3.3 Findings for third research aim⁶

This section details the findings for the penultimate research aim of “to identify factors that influence effective partnership working across VCS organisations in Liverpool.” The

⁶ The third research aim is to “identify factors that influence effective partnership working across VCS organisations in Liverpool.”

responses and analysis in this section are aimed at determining the influences of partnership working.

4.3.3.1 Organisational issues within partnerships with VCS organisations

To gain further insight into the reality of managing and developing partnerships with VCS organisations, Case Studies were questioned about the issues that they had experienced.

Table 4.7: Summary of data findings for organisational issues in managing and developing partnerships

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant time and resources to manage and develop partnerships • Developing formal partnerships (e.g. consortia) requires skilled and experienced managers – with input from specialists such as Legal / Human Resources • Need investment and training in staff engaged in partnership working – especially ‘soft’ skills such as communication, listening etc • Concerns over damage to organisation’s reputation if difficulties with partners / failure to deliver
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time intensive – challenging for a small VCS agency • Financial cost for 24 hr residential service re: funding for agency workers to cover for staff whilst off site at meetings / events • Lacks resources / funding – e.g. to hold open days / events etc • All staff should be involved in partnership working – addressed through induction, training etc; focus on relationship building skills. • With joint service delivery (i.e. multiple organisations working together to deliver a service) issues such as staff being employed on different salaries and Terms and Conditions by partner agencies can cause difficulties

CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships are time and labour intensive • Potential for dilution of core business; there needs to be a balance of core business verses partnership development • Personal development cost – staff and especially managers need knowledge of greater range of service areas as agenda becomes broader • Challenge of losing control over organisation’s ‘destiny’ through partnerships; lose autonomy which is a risk
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible approach to managing partnerships – depending on arrangement / size of partnership • Partnership development can be a slow bureaucratic processes – leads to frustration • Concerns over loss of control due to reliance on other organisations and impact on reputation if partnerships fails to deliver • Staffing in partnerships can be difficult issue; i.e. differences in salaries; job descriptions and hours • Partnership working skills need to be part of staff development – need technical skills, but most importantly interpersonal skills
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts in sustaining personal contact / relationships – keeping up with sector is time consuming • Potential loss of other opportunities – through investment in partnership A – you are not working with company B. • Need to invest in staff to support development of partnerships e.g. coaching – need for strong interpersonal skills for staff throughout organisation to support partnership working

Respondents expressed some of the challenges they have experienced within partnership working which can be distilled into key themes. Four Case Study organisations identified as a key issue that partnership working is time-intensive; with CS 2 commenting, “partnerships are a huge demand on your time – especially for a SME (Small Medium Enterprise) charity such as ours - you could spend all day, every day, out and about at meetings and engaged in partnerships” (personal communication, April 28th, 2010). Secondly, a range of other ‘costs’ were attributed to partnership working which included

the potential for ‘opportunity costs’ observed by CS 5, the possible dilution of core business and the financial and resource costs described by CS 2.

Furthermore, respondents also acknowledged partnerships raise staff development and Human Resource issues. The need for skilled staff and investment in personal development for staff and managers involved in partnerships was identified by all organisations, with four respondents focussing on the need for interpersonal or soft skills. Challenges with consistency in structures or Terms and Conditions for staff working together but employed by different organisations was also identified. Finally, three organisations highlighted the potential risks of partnership working in terms of loss of control, autonomy and reputational damage if the partnership or other organisation fails to deliver.

4.4.3.2 Decision-making and governance within VCS partnerships

The nature of decision-making and governance within partnership arrangements was explored with the Case Study organisations; and the key themes are summarised in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Summary of data findings for decision-making and governance

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making usually works well as long no power imbalance – can be challenges when one organisation holds the power • Aims to have consensual decision-making based on open dialogue and negotiation • Recognition that confrontation can be positive – it can clarify issues • Formality of decision-making arrangements and governance is dependent upon the nature of partnership
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making is informal within partnerships and is based on negotiation and trust • Decisions have to benefit both sides of partnership

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be tension in decision-making within partnerships due to procurement activity which results in competition • Can be conflict between decisions in partnerships and wider core values of organisations
CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships are governed by SLAs containing a Scheme of Delegation which specifies decision making processes • SLAs are reviewed on a cycle; however recognises that decision-making as defined by the SLA becomes less critical as the partnership develops • Internally, decision making flow chart is utilised to inform the types of partnerships the organisation becomes involved in – Trustees are involved in agreeing partnership development and arrangements
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not yet developed formal decision-making approaches – although acknowledges that it may need to develop if organisations enters into a major formal contract • Informal partnerships are not prescribed processes - instead decision-making happens naturally • Can be conflict over the decision-making timescales within organisation (e.g. cycle of Board of Trustee Meetings) and partnership opportunities which require quick decisions e.g. new opportunities • Currently reviewing the role of Board of Trustees, in decision-making and partnerships
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has SLAs in place which establishes decision-making arrangements but tries to operate within the spirit of the agreement • Adopts a model of sharing risks and benefits with partners • Focus on honesty and open discussion in making decisions

There appears to be different approaches to decision-making and governance across the Case Study organisations with the key variable being the formality of approach. Both CS 2 and 4 describe arrangements which are informal; however CS 4 acknowledges that their approach may need to evolve if the nature of their partnerships change. In contrast, CS 3 and 5 outline more prescriptive arrangements, which are governed by SLAs with formal decision-making schemes. However, both respondents indicated that in practice the

arrangements are not fully formalised, with CS 5 describing their approach as working within “the spirit as opposed to the letter of the contract.” In balance, CS 1 stated that formality of decision-making and governance is aligned to the nature of the partnership.

The majority (four) of respondents refer to issues of trust, openness and honesty, with a focus on consensus decision-making and negotiation. However, three Case Studies also alluded to difficulties with governance and decision-making in partnerships in relation to issues of power (CS 1), the potential for conflict with the core values of organisation and the challenges of time-scales and the role of trustees (CS 4). Two respondents (CS 3 and 4) touched on the issue of trustees in relation to partnerships and governance; however, the organisations appear to be at different stages. CS 3 outlined a clear process for decision-making and trustees, in contrast CS 4 observed, “we are looking at this with Trustees currently considering what is the nature of our partners? How do we enter into an agreement on a formal basis with another organisation? What’s the role of the Board?” (personal communication, May 5th, 2010).

4.4.3.3 Impact of external policy and environment on VCS partnerships

The literature review identified the impact of the external environment and policy on partnerships and therefore this was explored with the Case Study organisations. The key themes are outlined in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Summary of data findings for the impact of public policy and external environment

Case Study	Key Themes
CS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged both positive and negative impacts of recent policies • Positive impacts of political environment in that partnerships are clearly expected and a necessity to be successful in procurement, which encourages and facilitates collaboration • Procurement also resulted in increasing competition – having negative

	<p>impact on partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships will be needed to survive the economic climate – reducing resources could mean fewer organisations; mergers etc.
CS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of procurement tendering has resulted in competition caused negative impacts and introduced uncertainty Tension between managing positive partnership relationships and managing competition – need to keep boundaries General election will also impact; if the governing party changes, the policy direction will also change resulting in a change of partners Recession also introduced more uncertainty over funding – makes it difficult to plan for the long-term within partnerships
CS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent policy shifts has had significant positive impacts on whole sector Policy initiatives such as Local Area Agreements have broken down boundaries between organisations and facilitated more partnership working Shift to procurement also impacted partnerships – witnessed an increase in approaches to work in partnership from diverse organisations Procurement has provided an opportunity for the organisation to demonstrate their good practice etc. – but has resulted in some partners being more protective General election and recession also introduced level of uncertainty
CS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased focus on partnerships through procurement means the nature of the sector is changing - impact on partnerships through expanded partnership arrangements e.g. increase in the number of social enterprises Believes that increased focus on procurement will create more difficulties for smaller VCS organisations to survive without increased partnerships or collaboration or consortiums All the major political parties are encouraging of the Voluntary Sector and recognise the strength of the sector
CS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Sector pressures and procurement are requiring an increased sharing of resources and partnerships will be key to achieving this Policy initiatives such as Total Place will encourage VCS organisations

	<p>to share resources, services and intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement has introduced competition into partnerships – can cause tension and strain
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All respondents clearly identified that the external environment and policy direction is significantly influencing their partnerships with other VCS organisations. However, there is a variance as to whether the impacts are positive and negative. One of the key themes discerned from the responses, is in relation to commissioning and procurement, which was referenced by all respondents. This appears to have increased the focus on partnerships and the diversity of organisations, which is perceived to be positive. However, four of the Case Study organisations also stressed the negative impact of procurement and the element of competition and tension which has been introduced into partnerships, for example the reluctance of organisations to share practice and information resulting in organisational protectionism.

In addition to the impact of procurement, respondents also identified the impact of the economic climate and reducing resources in terms of the increased potential for mergers and the ongoing funding uncertainty. However, strategic initiatives such as Total Place, and the broader policy agenda were acknowledged as positively facilitating partnerships.

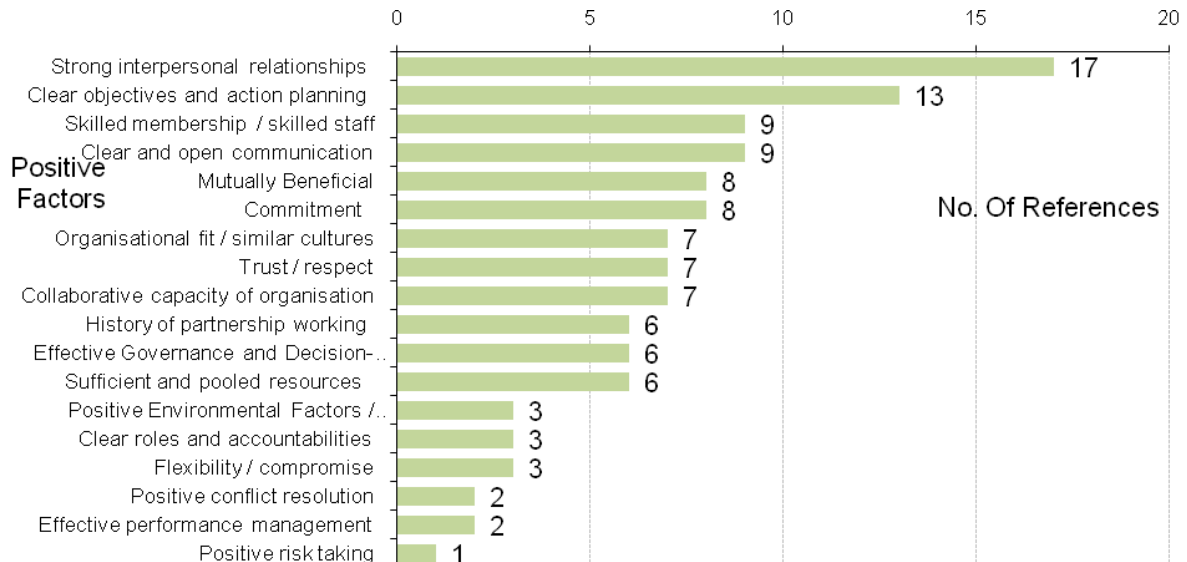
4.4.3.4 Influencers of partnership working

This section will consider a second form of analysis undertaken to ascertain the particular influences of partnership working as outlined in Chapter 3, section 3.5.3.

Although the conceptual model outlined in Chapter 2, suggested the presence of neutral influences, these were not identified during the primary research. Therefore, positive and negative influences are presented. Appendix 9 provides a summary of the factors identified by the Case Studies, and this is supported by the detailed data coding in Appendix 10.

Chart 4.3 demonstrates the identified positive influences on partnerships and confirms that the overriding positive influence on partnership working as identified by the respondents was strong interpersonal relationships between partners.

Chart 4.3 Positive factors influencing partnership working as identified by Case Study Organisations

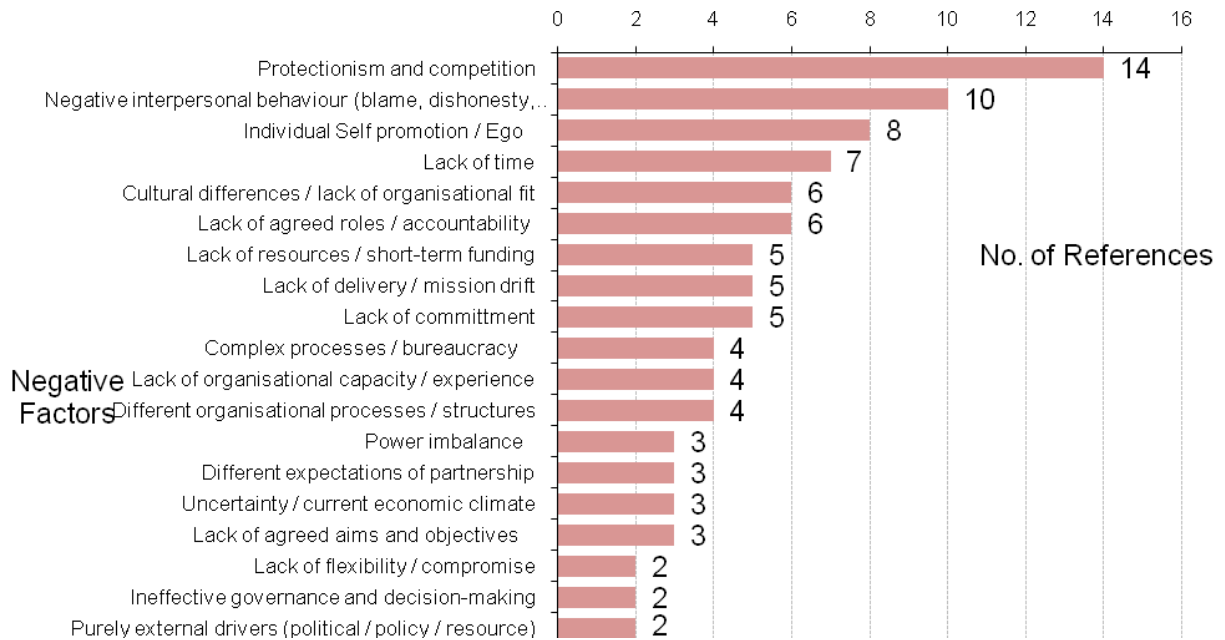


The importance of this factor is summarised by CS 5 who stated; “a lot of partnership is to do with personal relationships – that is important. In the Voluntary Sector we are in the people business and so the influences for our partnerships with other organisations are around people and the quality relationships with people” (personal communication, May 6th, 2010). There is a high degree of consistency between Case Study organisations identifying strong interpersonal relationships as significant. It was identified by all respondents and as the most important factor by three Case Study organisations (see Appendix 9).

The second most positive common factor influencing partnership working is the presence of clear objectives and action planning. Four of the Case Study organisations identified this attribute as influencing their partnerships; however, it varies in importance to the respondents; i.e. it was identified as a mid-range factor for two Case Studies (CS 2 and 3) and as one of the top factors for Case Study organisations 1 and 5 (see Appendix 9).

In contrast, Chart 4.4 establishes the identified negative influences on partnership working as identified by respondents.

Chart 4.4: Negative factors influencing partnership working as identified by Case Study Organisations



The most significant negative impact on partnership working between VCS organisations as identified by respondents was protectionism and competition. Protectionism describes the phenomena of organisations seeking to protect their own interests due to the impact of competition, which has been exacerbated by the introduction of tendering. The majority of respondents (four) rated this within the three most common factors and as the most critical factor for three of the organisations, which reflects the impact that this is having on the Case Study organisations.

Finally, negative interpersonal behaviour within partnerships was identified as the second most influential negative factor. Respondents described behaviour such as blame, dishonesty and aggression or abrasiveness, which had negatively affected their partnership working with organisations. Although highly rated as an influence, it was only identified by three of the Case Study organisations (CS 3, 4, 5); however, it was one of the most common factors for two organisations, which may indicate particular experiences for those respondents rather than a universal issue (See Appendix 9).

4.5 Summary

This chapter has focussed on the findings from the primary and secondary research undertaken to address the research aims. Secondary data from documentary research was presented regarding the nature of the VCS organisations funded by Liverpool's SP Programme; including an overview of the respondents, i.e. Case Study organisations. The findings from the primary research were comprehensively explored and distilled into key themes aligned to the research aims. The chapter concluded an overview of the partnership working influences determined from the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 5 - Analysis & Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The introductory chapter (Chapter 1) established that both partnership working and the VCS have become increasingly important in the public policy context, which led to the research question of seeking to understand the “Influencers of effective partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool.” Therefore, to answer the research question, this chapter will fully consider the primary research findings outlined in Chapter 4 in the context of the literature review and conceptual model. The chapter will commence with a critical evaluation of the methodology utilised, followed by an exploration of the findings by research aim. The chapter will conclude with a consideration of the research’s limitations and opportunities for further research.

5.2 Critical evaluation of adopted methodology

Chapter 3 provided a detailed outline of the research strategy employed and therefore this section will provide a critical evaluation of the chosen methodology. The researcher adopted a philosophical paradigm of an ‘interpretivist’ stance. This was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to understand the individual subjective experiences of partnership working and the complexity of the VCS (Burke, 2007). A case study approach was employed as a research strategy which is acknowledged as being suitable for researching VCS organisations (Alcock & Scott, 2005; Scott & Russell, 2005). This strategy was successful as it enabled the researcher to take a holistic approach and to identify and understand the respondent’s context and drivers for partnership working.

A purposive sampling approach was undertaken, which was beneficial as it built on the researcher’s knowledge of the sector. A suitable sample was constructed utilising a series of factors to obtain similar respondents for comparison purposes; however the outcome of this was a sample that was not fully representative of the sector, which impacts on the ability to make generalisations from the findings.

A qualitative methodology was employed using semi-structured interviews, which generated a significant amount of rich data and this method was consistent with the research strategy, adopted paradigm and available time and resources. However, in practice there was an issue of ‘researcher influence’ which occurred on two occasions, where respondents felt they could not discuss certain topics due to the researcher’s professional relationship with their organisation. The potential for this issue was highlighted in Chapter 3, in discussing the ethical dimensions of the research. However, as it only occurred on a limited number of occasions (two questions), it is not felt to have affected the overall validity or accuracy of the research. Finally, the structured approach to data coding had a strong academic basis and this is a strength of the research as it provided a clear and consistent theoretical framework for analysis.

5.3 Analysis/conclusions about each research aim

5.3.1. Introduction

This section will consider the findings of the research aims as outlined in Chapter 1, discussed in the context of the literature review and conceptual model. Although each research objective is considered, the commentary will focus on research aims two and three, which were explored through the primary research.

5.3.2 Analysis and conclusions for first research aim⁷

This research aim was comprehensively considered within Chapter 2; therefore, the position will only be briefly summarised in this section. The literature review concluded that both partnership working and the VCS play a prominent role in the public policy context, with a number of identifiable drivers. Furthermore, with the current funding pressure in the public sector and the newly elected Government’s programme the sector’s prominence is likely to increase.

⁷ The first research aim is “to understand the nature of contemporary literature on partnership working and its application to VCS organisations.”

In addition, there are a number of theoretical models that explain partnership working, for example Transaction Cost Theory (Williamson, 1975, 1985, 1991) and Resource Dependency Theory (as cited by Foster & Meinhard, 2002) which stresses the role of the external environment. However, these have mixed ability to explain partnerships within the VCS as to the sector's drivers are in relation to 'public good', as opposed to profit.

The literature review also identified that partnerships evolve through different stages and each stage is typified by different characteristics (e.g. Wilson & Charlton's Five Stage Model, 1997). A range of partnership types were also summarised which distinguish specific features and behaviours (e.g. Pratt et al's Whole Systems Working, 2005). Finally, a significant body of research was reviewed which suggests a range of Critical Success Factors and barriers to partnership working.

5.3.3 Analysis and conclusions for second research aim⁸

This section will consider what has been understood about partnership working between partnerships between VCS in Liverpool.

5.3.3.1 Organisational Context

The first theme explored with the Case Study organisations was in relation to the organisational context for partnership working; which the literatures suggests will be specific to each organisation (Paxton et al, 2005). There is mixed support for this proposition from the primary research findings (section 4.4.2.1) as the majority of respondents identified a common theme of meeting the needs of service users as the overriding context for their partnerships. This supports the Government's view of the sector as delivering greater choice and personalised services for citizens (Kelly, 2007) and is consistent with the drivers in the literature in relation to partnership working addressing society's "wicked issues" (Wildridge et al, 2004).

⁸ The second research aim is to "to understand the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool"

Improving outcomes for service users is also reflected in the findings in relation to the aims and objectives of partnership working discussed in Section 4.4.2.3. This identified that the aims and objectives of the Case Studies' partnerships centre on improving outcomes or better meeting the needs of service users. However, the findings also suggest that for some organisations there needs to be coherence between the partnership's aims and objectives and the organisational strategy. This is consistent with Snavely and Tracy, (2003) who believe that organisations will only collaborate when they are able to identify a concrete benefit for example achieving the organisation's mission or objectives.

As suggested by the conceptual model, the role of public policy and the external environment as part of the context for partnerships is acknowledged in the findings. This supports Pietroburgo and Wernet, (2004) who identified that the partnerships in the VCS are strongly affected by external policies and funding. However, although funding was identified as part of the context for partnerships for two Case Study organisations; there were differences in perspective. One respondent saw partnerships as saving funding, which aligns to the drivers within Transaction Cost Theory (Williamson, 1975, 1985, 1991) whereby partnerships develop to provide an opportunity to reduce costs (as cited by Foster & Meinhard, 2002). However, one of the respondents felt that funding opportunities facilitate partnerships, which is consistent with Resource Dependency Theory, a theory often utilised to explain partnerships within the VCS. For example, Guo and Acar, (2005) suggests that organisations will collaborate to obtain resources and to reduce uncertainty in a dynamic environment.

A consistent view of how the external environment and funding impacts partnerships did not emerge from the research. Furthermore, the literature suggests that funding and resources should have appeared as a stronger driver within the primary research (Diamond, 2006; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004; Charities Commission, 2009) than the findings demonstrate in practice. For example, Lofstrom (2009) suggests that the lack of resources is the most common driver for collaboration, however, it is clear that better outcomes for service users is the most common driver in this context.

5.3.3.2 Nature of partnership working

As suggested by the conceptual model, a key question in addressing this research aim was to explore the nature of existing partnerships. The findings in section 4.4.2.2 suggest a high degree of consistency in partnership arrangements operated by the Case Study organisations. All respondents identified a range of arrangements, consistent with Pratt et al's (2005), and Mattesich and Monsey (1992) model of 'co-operation', which are predominantly operational level arrangements with the aim of better meeting the needs of service users. Theorists also suggest a more formal category of 'co-ordination', which is operational in nature with a "collective goal and common objectives The drivers for this type of partnership are in relation to reducing duplication, pooling resources or service improvement" (Pratt et al, 2005). There is evidence that this model is being operated within the respondents who all identified partnerships with other VCS organisations, which are joint service delivery arrangements governed through SLAs, protocols or contracts.

The predominance of network arrangements in the findings across all respondents also supports Guo and Acar (2005) research which found that VCS organisations are involved in a wide variety of networks (Guo & Acar, 2005).

In summary, the primary research supports Guo and Acar's (2005) position that within the VCS, informal arrangements are more common than formal partnerships. However there is also evidence that this is changing with a number of respondents at different stages of considering and developing consortia. This is consistent with Foster and Meinhard's (2002) view that arrangements in the VCS are becoming increasingly formalised, which is likely to be influenced by tendering and development of consortia (Hardwick, 2009). The literature also reflects some of the concerns expressed by respondents during the research in relation to increased costs and the requirements for significant development time (OTS, 2009b; Hardwick, 2009).

5.3.3.3 Changing nature of partnerships

In seeking to understand the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool, the changing nature of partnerships was also explored as the literature suggests

that both partnerships and the operating environment of the sector are evolving. The analysis in Section 4.4.2.4 confirms that all of the Case Studies perceive their partnerships to be changing; however, the changes are not experienced as universal.

Firstly, all respondents stated that they were engaging with a new range of partnerships and organisations which is associated with factors such as changing service user needs and the dynamic and fluid environment of the sector, for example the increase in social enterprises (Alcock, 2009). Respondents suggested that the changing needs of service users required them to engage with new organisations in order to continue meeting their needs. Once again, this demonstrates the link between meeting the needs of service users and the development of partnerships within the VCS.

Furthermore, the policy and the external environment are again evident, as one of the drivers for changing the nature of partnerships between VCS organisations. This includes issues such as reducing resources resulting in more structured partnerships and all Case Studies recognised the impact of procurement policy. This may lend further support to Foster and Meinhard's (2002) view that organisations are more likely to seek partnerships due to reducing resources and uncertainty, which is consistent with the Resource Dependency Theory.

Finally, as can be seen there is little support within the findings for the life cycle models outlined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.3) such as Wilson and Charlton's (1997) Five Stage Model, which is based on the premise that partnerships evolve through a range of stages (Wildridge et al, 2004). These models may not be applicable to this research as they focus on formal partnerships and as can be seen from the discussion on the nature of partnerships, the Case Study organisations are mainly operating informal models of co-operation and co-ordination. Therefore, it is assumed that the stage of the partnership is not a significant influence on effective partnership working within this research.

5.3.3.4 Measuring performance and evaluating success

The final theme within this research aim relates to performance management and evaluation of partnerships within the Case Study organisations. The findings in 4.4.2.5 demonstrate

that this is a challenging area for respondents echoing the conclusions from the literature review. Glendinning (2002) suggested that success within partnerships should include a distinction between the partnership process, including the ‘health’ of relationships and the outcomes, which should equate to identifiable benefits (as cited by Boydell & Rugkåsa, 2007). This is consistent with the views of two respondents who acknowledged that the partnership experience is important in evaluating success including how conflict is addressed and the quality of interpersonal relationships.

In relation to the outcomes of partnerships, the majority of respondents stressed the need for having a clear and shared understanding of performance requirements. This supports the National Audit Office (2001) who stressed the need for performance targets, in order to assess whether partnerships are achieving their intended benefits (as cited by Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002). However, for three of the Case Studies, performance targets should be defined as improved outcomes for service users, which is consistent with the acknowledged drivers of partnership working, which also relates to improvements for service users.

5.3.4. Analysis and conclusions for third research aim⁹

As the nature of partnerships within the VCS in Liverpool has been explored, the third research aim will now be considered. This section will seek to identify the specific influences affecting the effectiveness of partnership working across VCS organisations.

5.3.4.1 Impact of external environment and public policy context

The literature review suggests the external environment, including the policy and political context has a significant influence on partnerships, as portrayed in the conceptual model. However, the model suggests that this influence is neutral, that is neither inherently positive nor negative, but context specific. Both Osborne (1996) and Diamond, (2006) stress the role of the local environment including the relevant social, economic and political issues and the primary research findings in section 4.4.3.4 support this. The findings demonstrate

⁹ The third aim is “to identify factors that influence effective partnership working across VCS organisations in Liverpool”

that the external environment and policy direction is exerting a powerful influence on the Case Studies partnerships with other VCS organisations and both positive and negative impacts can be ascertained.

Respondents acknowledged that broad strategic policies such as the SCS are positively facilitating partnerships. Furthermore, the increased focus on procurement is having positive benefits, in that it has both increased the profile of partnerships working and the diversity of organisations. This suggests that to an extent there is an “conducive external environment” which facilitates partnerships as described in the literature; that is, suitable structures, political support (Dowling et al, 2004) and supportive government policy (Snaveley & Tracy, 2003).

There is also evidence from the Case Studies of the impact of the current economic climate in terms of the increased potential for mergers and funding uncertainty on partnerships. Again, this lends support to Resource Dependency Theory, in explaining collaboration in the VCS; however, further research across a wider range of organisations of varying sizes would be required to confirm this.

All respondents confirmed the impact of procurement policies on partnerships and this is perceived to be negative for the majority of the Case Studies. This supports the Improvement and Development Agency, (2009) finding that there has been a funding shift for the sector away from grants and towards procurement and contracting. Both the literature and primary research concur that this has resulted in competition between agencies, which is explored further below.

5.3.4.2 Influencers of partnership working

The primary research also identified additional key positive influences which facilitates effective partnerships across the Case Study organisations. Section 4.4.3.5 identifies that respondents perceived strong interpersonal relationships between partner organisations as the most influential positive factor in their partnerships, which is consistent with Mattesich et al's (2001) 'membership' category.

The importance of interpersonal relationships is well-supported in the literature (Shaw, 2003; Tsasis, 2009; Huxham & Vangen, 2000) which focuses on the significance of building trust, mutual respect and compromise. This is also consistent with the primary research which identified ‘trust / respect’ as a mid-range factor. Overall, the findings concur with Tsasis, (2009) who identified that within the VCS, “socially positive interpersonal ties” were a significant predictor of successful partnership working. However, as will be discussed below, there is also evidence that the increasing competition within the sector is reducing trust between organisations. For example, respondents expressed an emerging reluctance to share information and good practice due to the competitive environment.

The second most influential positive factor identified from the research is the need for ‘clear objectives and action planning,’ which aligns to the concept of a shared vision, goals and objectives as found in Mattessich et al’s (2001) penultimate category of Critical Success Factors. The need for a clear and shared mission and agenda and task-orientated goals are themes referenced throughout the literature (Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Shaw, 2003; Lester et al, 2008). Respondents also focussed on the idea of partnerships needing to be mutually beneficial (the fourth most common factor), which is also consistent with the findings of Wistow, (2005) and Lester et al, (2008).

Tsasis (2009) suggests that the notion of shared and complementary goals may be particularly applicable to VCS organisations, due to their “mission-driven” nature.” There is potential support for this within the findings as respondents rated the need for cultural or organisational fit as a mid-range factor and conversely they also identified the negative impact of a lack of organisational fit.

The Case Study organisations also acknowledged a range of negative impacts on their partnerships with other VCS agencies, with the most prominent being competition. This is linked to LCC utilising whole-scale procurement to achieve the objectives of the SP Programme. The findings are consistent with Buckingham’s (2009) research into the impact of competition on VCS organisations, which identified that partners are becoming competitors, which is straining partnerships and is contrary to the need to work together to meet the needs of service users. The impact of competition on partnerships is not fully

understood; however, respondents did identify that they are experiencing a reduction in sharing information and practice and organisations are becoming more protective.

As, strong positive interpersonal influences was identified as the most positive influence; the converse has also been acknowledged; that is negative interpersonal behaviour (e.g. blame, dishonesty, aggression) which was identified as the second most common negative influence. Furthermore, the third factor of 'individual self-promotion / ego' also points to particular interpersonal behaviour negatively affecting partnerships. Tsasis (2009) who found that organisational relationships are founded on the personal attributes and positive behaviours of members may explain the impact of this behaviour; as it can be argued that if negative behavior is displayed, it will form a substantial barrier to successful partnership working. The literature identifies issues of partnerships failing due to personality issues (Charities Commission, 2009) and Mattessich et al (2001) identified that a history of antagonism and conflict between individuals can be a barrier to partnership working.

In summary, there are a range of factors which impact on partnership working between VCS organisations and these are supported by the literature findings.

5.3.5. Analysis and conclusions for fourth research aim¹⁰

Section 5.5 below and the recommendations outlined in Chapter 6 consider this research aim.

5.4 Conclusions about the research question

This research sought to understand the “influencers of effective partnership working between VCS organisations within Liverpool.” This was resolved through primary research guided by a conceptual model, which sought to identify the factors, which influence partnership working.

¹⁰ The fourth research aim is to draw appropriate conclusions and make appropriate recommendations regarding improving effective partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool”

A significant body of literature exploring partnership working and the role of VCS organisations has been reviewed and the most likely theory to explain partnerships within the VCS is Resource Dependency Theory. This is consistent with the primary research findings, which demonstrates the influence of the external environment, including the funding and policy context. However, the external environment and context does not appear to exert a uniform influence on VCS organisations with variances identified due to the nature of the policy or organisation. In addition, the overriding driver for working in partnership for VCS organisations is better meeting the needs of service users.

In identifying specific influences on partnerships, a wide range of positive and negative factors was identified. The predictors of effective partnerships are in relation to strong interpersonal relationships, including trust, respect, and having clear objectives. Conversely, negative interpersonal behaviour such as blame and dishonesty detracts significantly from the Case Studies partnerships. The strong influence of relationships within partnerships is potentially related to the nature and ideology of the sector. However, the introduction of tendering by LCC has led to competition between organisations and this is identified as having a powerful negative influence.

5.5 Overall conclusions

The following conclusions are reached through undertaking a comprehensive review of the literature and conducting primary research:

1. Liverpool's VCS organisations play a key role in service delivery for vulnerable groups within the SP Programme and receive a significant amount of funding from LCC (section 4.2 & 4.3).
2. Meeting the needs of service users is the key driver in partnerships between VCS organisations (see section 4.4.2.3 & 5.3.3.1).
3. The nature of partnerships between VCS organisations in Liverpool are mostly informal models or joint service delivery arrangements (see section 4.4.2.2 & 5.3.3.2).

4. The nature of partnerships is changing - organisations are beginning to explore more formal consortia arrangements due to procurement; and the uncertain external environment is also affecting partnerships (see section 4.4.2.4; 5.3.3.2 & 5.3.3.3).
5. There is limited understanding of measuring effectiveness across VCS partnerships – performance management and evaluation is a difficult area (see section 4.4.2.5 & 5.3.3.4).
6. The policy direction of LCC exerts a powerful influence on partnerships with other VCS organisations – this is having both positive and negative impacts (see section 4.4.3.4 & 5.3.4.1).
7. The quality of interpersonal relationships and behaviour are the key determinant of effective partnerships between VCS organisations; in addition, the presence of clear objectives and action planning has a significant positive influence on partnerships (see section 4.4.3.5 & 5.3.4).
8. Conversely, the most negative impact on partnerships between VCS organisations is competition; however, the consequences of this for the sector, partnerships and services is not fully yet known (see section 4.4.3.5 & 5.3.4).

5.6 Limitations of the study

Although section 5.2 identified that the overall research strategy and methodology was appropriate to answer the research question; the research does have limitations.

The results should not be generalised to a wide number of organisations because of the small number of similar cases examined. The researcher purposively identified those organisations of a medium size; however both national charities and small voluntary groups are likely to have different partnership experiences. Furthermore, the small sample size focussed on one sector, further limiting the ability to make generalisations. Diamond (2006) highlights this issue, observing that organisational differences in size and remit can make it difficult to draw generalisations about what makes partnerships effective.

Also, the researcher focused on strategic managers who were actively involved in partnerships to maximise the generation of data. However, this resulted in the consideration of only one organisational perspective and ideally the researcher would have also interviewed other managers and front-line staff. Furthermore, only organisations who were positively engaged in partnerships were included; and preferably, the researcher would have approached respondents who were not engaged in partnerships. This could have resulted in different findings in relation to the factors that prevent successful partnerships.

5.7 Opportunities for further research

There are a range of opportunities for further research arising from the above findings. The priority should be to determine whether the results are generalisable across a wider range of organisations; therefore as suggested by Shaw (2003) further research should be conducted using more structured methods, such as a survey of randomly selected organisations. Also, during the primary research respondents demonstrated an interest in the concept of a 'framework of partnership influences' building on the most common positive and negative factors identified from the research. This could be utilised to support partnership development and therefore, further research could be undertaken focusing specifically on this area. Finally, the research outcomes suggest some support for Resource Dependency Theory as an explanation of partnerships in the VCS; therefore, additional research could be undertaken with this model as its theoretical basis exploring whether it remains applicable across a wider range of agencies.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has analysed and concluded the whole research effort, placing the primary research findings in the context of the literature to consider the research question. The research aims, limitations of the study and opportunities for further research have been explored. This forms a foundation for the conclusion of the research in Chapter 6 with recommendations.

Chapter 6 - Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the key recommendations arising from the research conclusions established in Chapter 5. There are two clear sets of recommendations, which it would be beneficial to take forward; those for Liverpool City Council as funder and commissioner of the VCS organisations and VCS organisations in their role as partners and service providers. Recommendations are made for LCC due to the significant impact that LCC's policies has on the VCS and the leadership role of LAs in stimulating partnership working (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1996).

6.2 Key recommendations

6.2.1 Recommendations for Liverpool City Council

Table 6.1 Recommendations for Liverpool City Council

Number	Recommendation	Justification / Reference
1	Consider the role of and impact on VCS collaboration when designing and implementing strategic initiatives and policies – aim to maximise benefits wherever possible	Chapter 5 – section 5.5; Conclusions 1 and 6
2	Conduct research in liaison with VCS organisations into the impact that procurement and competition is having on services and ultimately service users	Chapter 5 – section 5.5; Conclusions 6 and 8
3	Review procurement policy, in light of findings of above research	Chapter 5 – section 5.5; Conclusions 6 and 8

6.2.2 Recommendations for VCS organisations

Table 6.2 Recommendations for Voluntary Community Sector

Number	Recommendation	Justification / Reference
4	Work together to better understand the potential to develop consortia and different ways of working in response to policy environment	See Chapter 5 – section 5.5; Conclusions 4 and 6
5	Develop a more structured and considered approach to partnership evaluation and performance management	See Chapter 5 – section 5.5; Conclusion 5
6	Seek to maintain positive aspects of partnerships and joint working in light of competition – agree ways of working together which provides benefits in the new operating environment	See Chapter 5 – section 5.5; Conclusion 8

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Appendix 1 - Background to Supporting People Programme

The Supporting People (SP) Programme was created in 2003, with the aim of ensuring that vulnerable people were able to receive support to live as independently as possible within the community. In England, the SP Programme enables more than a million people each year to attain or maintain independence, through the provision of housing related support services. Also, the SP Programme supports the reduction of re-offending, homelessness and rough sleeping, substance misuse and Anti-Social Behaviour thereby supporting the most vulnerable and socially excluded people contribute to wider society.

Local Authorities receive SP funding from Central Government (via Communities and Local Government) to enable them to develop local arrangements for the commissioning, funding and development of housing support services to meet local need. In June 2007, Communities and Local Government published a national strategy for Supporting People, Independence and Opportunity, which confirmed that housing support should be part of a partnership approach to delivering services to disadvantaged and vulnerable people. The strategy recognised the Programme's role in addressing social exclusion and the role of VCS organisations, including voluntary agencies, charities and housing associations in service delivery. The VCS receives over £1 billion annually on a national basis of SP funding and provides two-thirds of housing support services commissioned and funded by Local Authorities.

Source: Communities and Local Government, 2007; HM Treasury, 2007.

Appendix 2 – Summary of Factors from Literature Review

The below table summarises a detailed review of thirty published case studies and literature reviews on the facilitators of, or barriers to effective partnership working. This was utilised both to develop the researcher's theoretical knowledge of the area and to provide a sound basis for the data coding and analysis.

No.	Author and	Factors identified
1.	Lowndes and Sullivan, (2004)	Neutral influences: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• collaborative capacity of the partners• complexity of the task to be undertaken
2.	Huxham & Vangen, (2000)	Positive influences: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accountability to partnership• cross-section of members – key factor in success• representative membership• pooling of organisational resources• individuals have a powerful role• ability to be dynamic and flexibility• balance between flexibility and having a clearly defined membership structure Barriers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• difficulties in negotiating joint purpose because of diversity of individual organisations aims• communication difficulties – caused by differences in organisational language and cultures• difficulties in developing joint methods of operating due to differences with internal procedures• power imbalance

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulties of trust building • complex and ambiguous membership • self-interest – promoting self rather than organisation • difficulty in agreeing goals – due to covert agendas
3	Audit Commission, (1998)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreed on priorities for action • partners actively involved • making decisions that all partners endorse • sufficient resources to achieve the partnerships objectives • clear, shared objectives – with a realistic plan and timetable for reaching these objectives • commitment from the partners to take the partnership’s work into account within their mainstream activities • a clear framework of responsibilities and accountability • a high level of trust between partners • realistic ways of measuring the partnership’s achievements. • open and honest exchange helps - build trust, but time consuming; <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national policy - can: impose conflicting high-level objectives • imposed performance monitoring regimes that discourage collaboration • limited powers available to agencies to address problems • non-delivery – becomes a “talking shop” • focus on relationships at the expense of delivery
4.	Rowe, (2006)	<p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confusion around governance at local level – not joined up • public sector lacks understanding and experience of engaging

		<p>with VCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lack of clarity about purpose, roles and responsibilities • lack of transparency in decision-making • dominant Accountable Body • blurred conflicts of interest procedures • imbalance of power • lack of accountability • requires significant time and energy
5.	Joseph Rowntree Foundation, (1996)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducive policy context • strong leadership • commitment • inclusive, including service users • cultural realignment – “changing the way things are done” • appropriate membership <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of accountability
6.	Wildridge, Childs, Cawthra, & Madge, (2004)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing and achieving a common vision • strong level of mutual trust • clear and consistent communication • decision-making structures with accountability • commitment • celebrating and publicising success • visible and committed leadership • skilled staff – boundary spanners

7.	Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, (2001)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • history of collaboration or co-operation • favourable political and social climate • understanding and trust • appropriate cross section of members • members see collaboration as in their self-interest • ability to compromise • multiple layers of participation • flexibility • clear roles and policy guidelines • appropriate pace of development • communication - open and frequent • informal relationships • attainable goals and objectives • shared vision • unique purpose • sufficient resources (funds, staff, materials and time) • skilled leadership <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only central policy driven • fundamental ideological differences • power imbalance • a history of antagonism and failed attempts at working together • significant costs to working together • under-resourcing— lack of appreciation of the work involved in a partnership • conflicts over resources • cultural clashes • different organisational structures • different geographical boundaries • different lines of accountability
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8.	Diamond, (2006)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpersonal relationships - between agencies and individuals • need frequent contacts formal and informal links • need to support risk taking for innovation <p>Neutral factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local environmental factors – social, economic and political issues will have impact <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trust and common interests not established
9.	Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, (2004)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducive environment e.g. favourable financial climate, suitable institutional and legal structures • satisfactory accountability arrangements • appropriate audit, assessment and monitoring of the partnership • adequate leadership and management
10.	Wilson & Charlton, (1997)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation – having the right membership • power bases of organisations • appropriate resources through funding regime • environmental factors - political, social and economic • trust and respect • involvement and communication through stages
11	Carley, Chapman, Hastings, Kirk, & Young, (2000)	<p>Positive influences:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • political and executive leadership • shared ownership of agenda • build vision and consensus • need specific objectives – shared vision is not enough • wide membership • effective structures - need balance between inclusiveness and effectiveness • mutual understanding • skilled staff and managers • learning organisations <p>Neutral influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy context
12	Wistow,(2005)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity of shared purpose in user outcome terms • clarity of governance and decision making • mutually beneficial • common culture <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • driven by national directives and mainly by questions of resources, • major differences in culture and governance
13	Osborne, (1996)	<p>Neutral influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • context is fundamental to defining partnership direction • role of key individuals in the innovation process
14	Osborne & Murray, (2000)	<p>Positive influences:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common values • leadership – allows for cultural differences to be negotiated • commitment • “embeddedness in a pre-existing informal network / network connections” • common external pressures
15	Bracken, (2007)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear purpose • agreement of roles and responsibilities • recognises each member’s unique contributions • trust • commitment to clear communication – common understanding of terms / using similar language <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differences in funding • differences in perceived power • differences in purpose • different organisational cultures and ideology • incompatible communication styles • lack of flexibility • lack of resources • inability to deal with conflict
16	Boydell & Rugkåsa, (2007)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build relationships • understanding partner’s organisation and agenda • trust

		<p>Neutral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • political climate <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflict between partners • time consuming • changing and conflicting policies • availability of resources
17	Lester, Birchwood, Tait, Shah, England, & Smith, (2008)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared priorities and principles • arrangement led to some mutual benefit • complimentary skills • joint staff development <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural differences • lack of time – especially for smaller organisations • lack of resources – especially for smaller organisations • Funding – uncertainty of funding
18	Kernoghan, (1993)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of all partners • mutual dependence between the partners • equal balance of power • trust • sense of ownership • professional commitment • pooling of resources

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific objectives • Formal agreements – signal commitment and specific accountability
19	Evans & Killoran, (2000)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared strategic vision (critical enabling factor) • history of working together • strong leadership and continuity • effective project management • local ownership • interpersonal relationships – requires mutual understanding • clear accountability • organisational readiness and capacity • joint staff development / investment in team building • responsive to changing policy environment <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack or only partial vision • differences in priorities, structures, processes and cultures
20	Shaw, (2003)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trust each other to act in interests of project • flexibility • “partners have low role boundary.” i.e. being comfortable with changing demands; have a high “tolerance for ambiguity” • cultural fit / compatibility • balance of power • shared mission • enthusiasm • mutually beneficial • good interpersonal relationships

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trust • communication • information sharing – both formal and informal mechanisms required • commitment <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individuals seeking to increase their position at expense of partnership
21	Snavely & Tracy, (2003)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong leadership • organisational resources • trust • access to political power • being truthful and respectful • policies and mandates that stimulate partnership e.g. access to funding <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restrictive government policies e.g. restrictions on service delivery caused by funding • restrictive monitoring requirements
22	Alexander, Comfort, Weiner, & Bogue, (2003)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systems thinking - specifying targets, and developing the partnership's strategy • willingness to work with, and learn from, individuals and organisations • taking a strategic view • vision and action toward long-term aims

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defined core values and purpose • power-sharing • sense of joint ownership and collective responsibility • interpersonal skills / relationships
23	Friend, (2006)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • similar organisations who are engaged together in shared task • skilled staff who can work across boundaries • trust • inter-personal relationships is critical • staff who can facilitate group decision-making <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant differences in partners
24	Taylor (2000) (as cited in Southern, 2002)	<p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partnerships that have to be developed quickly • procedural and structural demands
25	McMurray, (2007)	<p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant organisational change • lack of communication • lack of decision-making processes • over-reliance on formal contracts / agreements – absence of trust • competition • lack of organisational capacity • insufficient time • short-term funding • Purely driven by policy / context (e.g. political / financial

		<p>imperatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of shared understandings
26	Greasley, Watson, & Patel, (2008)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each partner gains from additional resources • sharing resources • balance of power between organisations • inter-personal relationships • sense of belonging • communication and engagement through all levels • commitment <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shallow and limited contact • lack of trust • lack of sense of joint commitment • power imbalance • competition • lack of communication
27	Huxham (1996)	<p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differences in aims • differences in language • differences in procedures • differences in culture • power imbalance • time consuming
28	Huxham & Vangen, (2000)	<p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differences in cultures

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational capacity • inequalities in power • problems of accountability • lack of role clarity
29	Kanter (1989) (as cited by Balloch & Taylor, 2007)	<p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shifts in strategy by one or more partner • absence of a common framework • uneven levels of commitment • imbalances in power • imbalances in benefits • conflicting loyalties
30	Huxham & Vangen, (1996)	<p>Positive influences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willingness to compromise • joint team building • clear and agreed set of aims • willingness to compromise • task orientated goals • good communication • “explicit and considered membership – inclusive; balance of inclusive vs. effectiveness” • clear accountability • trust • respect and honesty • willingness to take a risk <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hidden agendas, which are not brought out into the open. • “glory seekers” – pushing their own agendas • too narrow a remit

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differences in aims • cultural differences • time consuming • problems with language / jargon • power imbalance • lack of autonomy • different management styles • Lack of organisational / member experience of partnership working • different decision-making processes • lack of commitment • different cultural values and norms
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Appendix 3 – Detailed Research Instrument Design

1. Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 3 Section 3.4.1, the design of the research instrument in the form of questions asked within the semi-structured interviews was heavily influenced by the themes and issues identified in the literature review. Therefore, this appendix establishes the grounding in the literature for the questions to support the construction of the research instrument. The questions are organised by research aim.

Research Aim	Question and Number	Origin from literature review and reason for question
Research Aim 2 - To understand the nature of partnership working between VCS organisations in Liverpool	1. Can you tell me a little about yourself, organisation, and the type of services you deliver?	To obtain background information on the Case Study organisation and respondent. The question also supports the interpretivist research paradigm and case study research strategy which requires the researcher to understand the reality of the object of enquiry. Also, Paxton et al (2005) stresses that the operating environment and context will be specific to each VCS organisation and therefore its imperative for the researcher to first understand the organisation under investigation
	2. What are the drivers and context for partnership working with other VCS organisations for your organisation?	There are a wide range of both policy and organisational drivers for partnership working: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficiency and making better use of, or increased access to resources is a key partnership driver (Diamond, 2006;

		<p>Lowndes & Sullivan, 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address ‘wicked issues’ and fragmented service delivery (Freeman & Peck; 2006; Wildridge, Childs, Cawthra, & Madge, 2004). • National / local government policy has a significant influence on partnerships e.g. Boydell and Rugkåsa, (2007) – partnership is central to government’s response to tackling complex policy issues
	<p>3. What types of partnerships with VCS is your organisation involved in? Can you give me some examples?</p>	<p>Different partnership types will display different forms of behaviour and characteristics according to the behaviour based models of partnership and therefore it is critical to the research aim to understand the nature of partnerships being operated by the Case Study organisations (e.g. Whole Systems Working - Pratt, Gordon, & Plamping, 2005; typology stated by Mattesich & Monsey, 1992).</p>
	<p>4. What are aims or objectives of the partnerships with VCS organisations that you are involved in?</p>	<p>The role of a clear aims and objectives are identified as critical to partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mattesich et al (2001) - shared vision, goals and objectives is a Critical Success Factor in partnerships • Effective partnerships require a clear set of aims and objectives and a shared mission and agenda (Huxham & Vangen, 1996; Shaw, 2003; Lester et al, 2008).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals are more likely to be achievable if they are task-orientated (Huxham & Vangen, 1996). • Partnership objectives should be mutually beneficial to all partners (Wistow, 2005; Lester et al, 2008; Glendinning, 2002). • Difficulties in agreeing goals and existence of covert agendas can lead to 'collaborative inertia' (Huxham & Vangen, 2000)
	<p>7. Have you seen your partnership working with other VCS organisations evolve or change? How? Can you give me an example recently when this has occurred?</p>	<p>Theories of partnership working would suggest that partnerships move through a series of phases (e.g. Wilson & Charlton, 1997) therefore it is important to understand if the Case Study organisations partnerships are evolving / changing.</p> <p>Also, Huxham and Vangen (2000), state that partnerships and structures are dynamic and consistently changing; as is the membership. Also, the VCS i.e. area under investigation is constantly evolving and dynamic (Scott & Russell, 2005)</p>
	<p>10. How do you measure performance and evaluate success within partnerships with other VCS organisations? How do you know they are effective?</p>	<p>Literature acknowledges that evidence-base of partnerships delivering actual improvements is limited; therefore it was felt important to understand how this issue is addressed within Case Study organisations currently. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care Institute for Excellence, (2005) suggests that there is limited evidence of improved outcomes for service users

		<p>from working in partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rummery (2002) states that there are issues of evaluation and lack of evidence for partnership working which may be due to the lack of criteria to define success (i.e. current measures are not SMART), validity and reliability and a lack of clarity to what effective partnership means). <p>Also, the Economic and Social Research Council, (2009) stresses that as Government is now the major funder of the VCS, the sector is becoming increasingly driven by performance management and evaluation.</p>
<p>Research Aim 3 - To identify factors that influence effective partnership working across VCS organisations in Liverpool</p>	<p>5. What are the issues that your organisation has experienced in partnership working with other VCS organisations?</p>	<p>Literature identifies that partnership working is not straightforward and there can be a series of issues and barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources and short term can negatively impact on partnerships and there is a lack of understanding of costs involved e.g. Lester et al (2008); McMurray (2007); Mattessich et al (2001). • Partnerships are time consuming and require significant time, determination and energy, e.g. Rowe, (2006), Boydell and Rugkåsa, (2007); Lester et al, (2008). • In VCS sector resource issues in the form of funding uncertainty and inequalities in staff terms and conditions can create issues for partnerships (Wistow, 2005)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition has made partnerships between VCS increasingly difficult to manage (Hardwick, 2009) • Incompatible organisational cultures, ideology, and structures can be a significant barrier (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Darlow et al, 2005; Integrated Care Networks, 2010) • Issues of power, inequality and difficulties in interpersonal relationships have a negative impact on partnerships (Mayo & Taylor, 2001; Charities Commission, 2009; Mattessich et al, 2001).
	<p>8. Can you explain to me the decision-making and governance within your partnership arrangements with VCS organisations?</p>	<p>Mattessich et al (2001) categories of Critical Success Factors for partnership working include a consideration of processes and structure. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective partnerships structures require clear, fair and transparent processes (Carley, Chapman, Hastings, Kirk, & Young, 2000; Huxham & Vangen, 2000). • The membership of the partnership should be carefully considered at its commencement. • There can be issues with structures and processes in partnership including ambiguity in roles and representativeness (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). • VCS organisations can be involved in numerous governance arrangements, which cause further complexity (Huxham & Vangen, 2000).

	<p>11. Does the external environment and/or policies impact on your partnerships with other VCS organisations? If so, How? Examples?</p>	<p>There is a significant body of research which indicates that context and the external environment are fundamental to partnerships and therefore the research sought to explore the impact on VCS organisations. For example, the literature suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local context in terms of the relevant social, economic and political issues will have a significant impact on partnership working (Osborne, 1996; Diamond, 2006) • A positive external environment is a powerful influence on encouraging partnership working including a favourable financial climate, suitable structures, political support (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004) • Supportive government policy can positively influence partnerships (Snaveley & Tracy, 2003).
	<p>11. What factors do you think make partnerships with other VCS work? Can you give me an example of successful partnership working with another VCS organisation? What do you think made it successful – why did work?</p>	<p>The literature suggests that partnerships can be challenging and are not without risk and therefore significant research has been undertaken to understand the ‘preconditions’ that need to be achieved for a partnership to succeed (for example, Coulson, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2000).</p> <p>The research sought to understand the positive influences that specifically impact on partnerships across the VCS organisations.</p>

	<p>12. What factors do you think make partnerships with other VCS ineffective or fail? Can you give me an example of unsuccessful partnership working with another VCS organisation? What do you think made it unsuccessful – what went wrong?</p>	<p>As above, with a focus on barriers or negative influences.</p>
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Appendix 4 – Participant Information and Consent Form

Participant Information and Consent Form

“Influencers of Partnership Working between Voluntary Community Sector organisations in Liverpool”

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

My name is Kath Wallace and I am Master of Business Administration student at the University of Chester. The purpose of my study is to seek to understand what factors influence the outcome of partnership working between Voluntary Sector agencies within Liverpool funded by the Supporting People Programme. It is hoped that this will enhance our understanding of how we can better facilitate and manage relationships with partner agencies especially the Voluntary Sector within Liverpool.

You and your organisation have been identified as a potential Case Study. You can help in this study by consenting to be interviewed and to have this interview recorded using a digital MP3 recording device. In addition, I am also asking permission to share relevant information about your organisation, for example Annual Reports which will help with the research.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent at any time during or after the interview. No names or other information that might identify yourself or organisation will be used in any publication or documentation arising from the research. If you decide to not participate in the study or withdraw at any point it will in no way affect your relationship with Liverpool City Council.

Being part of the study will involve participating in an interview, which will take approximately 1 – 1.30 hours.

After transcription, the original recordings will be stored for a period of twelve months in a safe and secure manner and then will be destroyed. Written transcripts will be made from the recording and will contain no names or details that may identify you or your organisation. The information disclosed during the interviews will be used solely in connection with this research project and will not be disclosed to any further.

The information provided will be analysed and used in the production of an MBA dissertation and this could include the publication of anonymous quotes from the interview.

If you are willing to participate in the study could you please sign the attached consent form?

If you have any questions please contact me on

Many thanks for your time and co-operation.

Kath Wallace

Consent Form

Title of Research	Influencers of Partnership Working between Voluntary Community Sector
Name of Researcher	Kath Wallace
Contact Details	

Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐
4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded. ☐
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 5 – Interview Questions and Guide

Interview Guide

Date / Time	
Setting	
Respondent / CS organisation	
Observations / notes:	

Prior to interview:

- Introduce Researcher
- Thank interviewee for time
- Reiterate purpose of study
- Explain terminology
- Confirm permission to record
- Confidentiality reminder
- Opportunity for interviewee to ask questions

1.	Can you tell me a little about yourself, organisation, and the type of services you deliver?

2.	What are the drivers and context for partnership working with other VCS organisations for your organisation?
3.	What types of partnerships with VCS is your organisation is involved in? Can you give me some examples?
4.	What are aims or objectives of the partnerships with VCS organisations that you are involved in?
5.	What are the issues that your organisation has experienced in partnership working with other VCS organisations?
6.	Have you seen your partnership working with other VCS organisations evolve or change? How? Can you give me an example recently when this has occurred?
7.	Can you explain to me the decision-making and governance within your partnership arrangements with VCS organisations?
8.	How do you measure performance and evaluate success within partnerships with other VCS organisations? How do you know they are effective?
9.	Does the external environment and/or policies impact on your partnerships with other VCS organisations? If so, How? Examples?

10.	What factors do you think make partnerships with other VCS work? Can you give me an example of successful partnership working with another VCS organisation? What do you think made it successful – why did work?
11.	What factors do you think make partnerships with other VCS ineffective or fail? Can you give me an example of unsuccessful partnership working with another VCS organisation? What do you think made it unsuccessful – what went wrong?

Thank participant for time.

Appendix 6 – Data Analysis Tool

Categories – Data Analysis for Primary Research

Organisational context and drivers				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Nature / types of partnerships				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Aims and objectives				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Issues in managing / developing partnerships				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Change / Adaptation in Partnership Working				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Decision-making / Governance				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Measuring performance and evaluating success within partnerships				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Impact of external environment / policy				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Positive factors / influencers				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Negative factors / influencers				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Neutral factors / influencers				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5

Appendix 7 – Summary of Research Ethics Framework

Summary of Framework for Research Ethics

Principles, Procedures and Minimum Requirements

Extracted from the Economic and Social Research Council's, (2010) Framework for Research Ethics

Economic and Social Research Council is one of seven research councils. ESRC is a non-departmental public body funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, which funds research and training in social and economic issues. The Framework is an attempt to reflect, disseminate and standardise current good practice.

The Framework for Research Ethics (FRE) is based on the Research Ethics Framework published in 2005. The principal aim of the ethics review is, as far as possible, to protect all groups involved in research: participants, institutions, funders and researchers. Based on 6 key principles:

There are six key principles of ethical research that the ESRC expects to be addressed whenever applicable:

The six key principles:

1. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency.
2. Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved.
3. The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.
4. Research participants must take part voluntarily, free from any coercion.

5. Harm to research participants must be avoided in all instances.
6. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.

Appendix 8 – Summary of Themes from Primary Research

Interview Analysis from Case Study Organisations

1. Organisational context and drivers for partnership working				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
<p>Strategic, operational and political</p> <p>Based around needs of Service User, as one agency cannot meet all needs.</p> <p>Service development, co-ordination and improvement</p> <p>Increase awareness of changes within the sector e.g. the procurement processes and how agencies are</p>	<p>Key driver is meeting the needs of the client group – can only be achieved through working in partnership</p> <p>Saves funding – too expensive for all services to be delivered through one agency</p>	<p>Creating value for service users and organisation</p> <p>Funding opportunities facilitate a lot of the partnerships e.g. bidding for a tender, applying for grant</p> <p>Partnerships sometimes opportunistic and not strategic</p>	<p>Organisational ethos is to seek partnerships out when it is advantageous and beneficial</p> <p>Driven by commissioning policy</p> <p>Reputation – need to be viewed as an outward facing organisation</p>	<p>Partnerships developed to meet business objectives</p> <p>Driven by organisational position in the market (in terms of size, strengths etc) and partnerships are supporting business objectives.</p> <p>To enrich the business planning process</p> <p>Recognises wider strategic context – such</p>

viewed				as reducing public sector budgets etc
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2. Nature of partnerships with other VCS organisations				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
Operational level focussing on multi agency responses to service users e.g. Complex Needs Groups Joint service delivery agreement governed by protocols and SLAs – e.g. ring fenced beds for rough sleepers Network groups with other VCS – focussed on information sharing	Operational level - focussed on service delivery to deliver improved outcomes for service users - linked to individual assessment of service user needs Networks groups – focussed on sharing information / practise e.g. Hostel Managers Forum Joint service delivery –	Operational level focussing on service users and meeting their needs Strategy development – working with other VCS across region to develop strategies / common approaches e.g. Regional partnership Joint service delivery with agreements and	Operational level – service delivery (aimed at better outcomes for service users) e.g. co-ordinating multi-agency working in CS 4 supported housing service Networks to provide a voice for Voluntary Sector and information sharing e.g. Social Care Champions	Operational level – focussed on outcomes for cohorts of service users e.g. nomination agreements with allocated properties for specialist VCS agencies e.g. domestic violence refuge Network - wider strategic and operational level contacts aimed at information sharing /

<p>service co-ordination</p> <p>Exploring formal partnerships with VCS in relation to shared services or tenders – would have legal status and implications</p>	<p>working with another agency to deliver a service / contract – e.g. Sanctuary Project</p>	<p>protocols – e.g. SLAs with local VCS agencies to provide emergency access to beds for rough sleepers</p>	<p>Joint service delivery which are governed through SLAs</p> <p>Developing consortia agreements – in principle commitment to work with other VCS organisations to tender for services</p>	<p>good practice – e.g. Floating Support Forum</p> <p>Joint Service Delivery: e.g. managing agent relationships, managed through contracts / SLAs</p> <p>Currently considering options around consortia</p> <p>.</p>
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3. Aims and objectives of partnership working				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
Acknowledged the importance of having	Key aim of partnerships is to	Recognised importance of clear objectives	Aware of importance of having defined	Links the aims / objectives of

<p>clear aims and objectives in partnerships</p> <p>Stressed the need to be clear objectives, roles, benefits and responsibilities of partnerships</p> <p>Lack of clarity on objectives can lead to partnership being ineffective</p>	<p>deliver positive outcomes for service users through holistic services</p> <p>Develop partnerships to ensure access to other VCS services for service users</p> <p>Critical to be clear on objectives at start of partnership</p> <p>Identified that aims and objectives of partnership can change e.g. partnership with one VCS started about access to additional services and funding for service users; however developed to into more strategic</p>	<p>Key is the service to beneficiaries (e.g. service users)</p> <p>Also have to be in line with the strategic plan of the organisation</p> <p>Build organisation capacity</p>	<p>objectives: identified primary and secondary drivers</p> <p>Primary - Better outcomes for service users</p> <p>Secondary drivers – link to business objectives i.e. maintaining the delivery of services; learning from other organisations</p>	<p>partnerships to the business objectives of the organisation</p> <p>Key driver is better outcomes and improved quality of life for service users</p> <p>Aims and objectives need to be clarified and agreed at beginning of partnership for it to be effective</p>
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	service development			
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4. What are the issues for your organisation in managing / developing partnerships with VCS organisations?				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
Requires significant time and resources to manage and develop partnerships	Time intensive – challenging for a small VCS agency	Partnerships are time and labour intensive	Flexible approach to managing partnerships – depending on arrangement / size of partnership i.e.	Potential loss of other opportunities – through investment in partnership A – you are not working with company B.
Developing formal partnerships (e.g. consortia) has legal and financial implications requires skilled and experienced managers – with input from specialists such as Legal / Human Resources	Financial cost for 24 hr residential service re: funding for agency workers to cover for staff whilst off site at meetings / events	Potential for dilution of core business; core business verses partnership development	informal partnerships is looser agreements; formal partnerships would require SLA / Contract etc.	Efforts in sustaining personal contact / relationships – keeping up with sector
Need to invest in and train staff in partnership working – especially	Lacks resources / funding – e.g. to hold open days / events etc	Personal development cost – staff and especially managers needs knowledge of greater service areas as agenda becomes broader	Partnership development can be a bureaucratic processes and slow – leads to frustration	Need to invest in staff to support development of partnerships e.g. coaching – need for strong interpersonal skills for staff throughout organisation
	All staff should be involved in partnership working – addressed through induction,	Challenge of losing control over	Concerns over loss of control due to reliance	

<p>‘soft’ skills such as communication, listening etc</p> <p>Concerns over damage to organisation’s reputation if difficulties with partners / failure to deliver</p>	<p>training etc. focus on relationship building skills.</p> <p>With joint service delivery (i.e. multiple organisations working together to deliver a service) issues such as staff being employed on different salaries and Terms and Conditions by partner agencies can cause difficulties</p>	<p>organisation’s ‘destiny’ through partnerships; lose autonomy which is a risk</p>	<p>on other organisations and impact on reputation if partnerships fails to deliver</p> <p>Staffing in partnerships can be difficult issue; i.e. differences in salaries; job descriptions and hours</p> <p>Partnership working skills need to be part of staff development – need technical skills, but most importantly interpersonal skills</p>	
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5. Change and Adaptation in Partnership Working				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
<p>Yes – organisation is investing more time in partnerships due to increased emphasis on partnership working within policy</p> <p>Nature is changing - partnerships becoming more structured – has to see value in partnerships due to limited time / resources</p> <p>Working with different partner agencies as VCS more fluid – agencies emerging and withdrawing from sector</p>	<p>Yes - both nature and type of partner has changed</p> <p>Changing needs of service users resulting in need to work with new organisations to meet them</p> <p>Nature of partnerships have changed linked to funding climate and context driven by funders</p> <p>Key change in nature of partnerships is partnerships are now more outcome-focussed</p>	<p>Yes – range of partnerships is becoming broader both in terms of type of organisation and nature of activities</p> <p>Changing needs of service users also requires different partnerships to meet needs</p> <p>Partnerships are also reflecting the changing broader strategic agenda e.g. current policy focus on health and housing</p>	<p>Yes - partnership working is a more natural state for the organisation</p> <p>Engaging with more diverse range of partners</p> <p>Partnerships are key to maintaining service delivery in current procurement climate</p>	<p>Yes – nature of partnerships has changed because of policy / operating environment</p> <p>Increased focus on procurement policy has led to competitive environment</p> <p>Competition has affected ability to share good practise and innovation – put partnerships under strain</p> <p>Procurement has resulted in new partners as its a more dynamic</p>

Partnerships need to be able to respond to change				environment
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6. Decision-making and Governance in partnerships				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
Decision-making usually works well as long no power imbalance – can be challenges when one organisation holds the power Prefers decision-making to be consensual based on open dialogue, negotiation, recognising that confrontation can be positive	Decision-making is informal within partnerships and is based on negotiation and trust Decisions have to benefit both sides of partnership Can be tension in decision-making within partnerships due to procurement activity which results in competition	Partnerships are governed by SLAs containing a Scheme of Delegation regarding and level of decision making SLAs reviewed on a cycle; however recognises that decision-making as defined by the SLA becomes less critical as the partnership develops Internally, decision	Has not developed formal decision-making yet – although acknowledges that it may need to develop if enter into a major formal contract. Within informal partnerships there are not formal processes in place – decision-making happens naturally on a basis of trust Can be conflict over the	Has Contracts / Management Agreements in place which establishes decision-making arrangements but tries to operate within the spirit of the agreement Adopts a model of sharing risks and benefits with our partners Focus on honesty and open discussion in making decisions

Formality of decision-making is dependent upon the nature of partnership	Can be conflict between decisions in partnerships and wider core values of organisations	making flow chart is utilised to inform the types of partnerships the organisation becomes involved in – Trustees are involved in agreeing partnerships	<p>decision-making timescales within organisation (e.g. cycle of Board of Trustee Meetings) and partnership opportunities which require quick decisions e.g. new opportunities</p> <p>Currently reviewing the role of Board of Trustees, decision-making and partnerships</p>	
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7. Measuring performance and evaluating success within partnerships				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
<p>Evaluating and measuring performance can be a difficult area within partnerships</p> <p>Need to be clear on measures and what constitutes success from the start and consequences for non-delivery</p> <p>Organisations need to be accountable</p> <p>Issues with performance within a partnership is an area of risk for the organisation</p> <p>Where performance</p>	<p>Acknowledged its difficult area – can cause tension</p> <p>Organisation utilises its own internal performance measures</p> <p>Prefers funders to set targets across partnership – removes the tension</p> <p>Performance should be linked to outcomes for service users</p> <p>Success should be the achievement of the partnership objectives – therefore you need to</p>	<p>Performance management is specified within SLAs formal performance reporting; and exception reporting</p> <p>Utilises Key Performance Indicators to measure performance</p> <p>Address under-performance through learning and reflection</p> <p>Can be issues within partnerships when it is not clear what each organisation is achieving and can</p>	<p>Recognises that performance management can be challenging in partnerships</p> <p>Need to be clear on roles; understanding of performance and what constitutes success in beginning of partnerships</p> <p>Identify if outcomes for service users have been delivered</p> <p>Success should also include considering the partnership experience and the satisfaction</p>	<p>Need to have a shared understanding of performance management</p> <p>Performance management based on trust, understanding and clarity</p> <p>Difficult to measure the success of a partnership</p> <p>Measures should focus on outcomes for service users</p> <p>Difficult to quantify success as partnerships at different stages – success can be long</p>

management and evaluation had been ineffective within partnerships there has been negative consequences	be clear about aims and objectives at beginning of partnership	therefore claim outcomes Success should be evaluated by examining both the outcomes and experience of partnership	with the relationships	term e.g. regeneration Acknowledged that it is challenging where there are multiple partners and investment cannot link in linear relationships to the outcome Organisation is cautious about using just formal measures to evaluate partnerships as the relationship created can lead to future opportunities
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8. Has your organisation seen any recent external policy shifts impact on partnership working?				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
Yes – both positive and negative impacts of	Yes – caused negative impacts and introduced	Yes – policy shifts has had significant positive	Yes - increased focus on partnerships through	Yes – the Public Sector pressures and

recent policies	uncertainty	impacts on whole sector.	procurement means the nature of the sector is changing and this is impacting on partnerships; this is widening partnership arrangements e.g. increase in the number of social enterprises	procurement will result in an increased sharing of resources and partnerships will be key to achieving this
Positive impacts of political environment in that partnerships are clearly expected and a necessity to be successful in procurement	Introduction of procurement tendering has resulted in competition and decisions becoming more “business-like.	Policy initiatives such as Local Area Agreements has broken down boundaries between organisations and facilitated more partnership working	Believes that increase focus on procurement will create more difficulties for smaller VCS organisations to survive without increased partnerships or collaboration or consortiums	Policy initiatives such as Total Place will encourage VCS organisations to resources, services and intelligence
Procurement also resulted in increasing competition – having negative impact on partnerships	Tension between managing partnership relationships and managing competition – need to keep boundaries	Shift to procurement also impacted partnerships – receive more approaches to work in partnership diverse organisations		Procurement has introduced competition into partnerships – can cause tension and strain .
Partnerships will be needed to survive the economic climate – reducing resources could mean fewer organisations; more mergers etc.	General election will also impact; if the – governing party changes, the policy direction will also change resulting in a change of partners.	Procurement has provided an opportunity for the organisation to demonstrate their good practice etc. – but has	All the major political parties are encouraging of the Third Sector and recognise the strength	

	<p>Recession also introduced more uncertainty over funding – makes it difficult to plan for the long-term within partnerships</p>	<p>resulted in some partners being more protective</p> <p>General election and recession also introduced level of uncertainty</p>	of the sector	
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9. Positive factors influencing effective / successful partnerships				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
See Appendix 9 and 10				

10. Negative factors influencing ineffective / unsuccessful partnerships?				
CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5
See Appendix 9 and 10				

Appendix 9 – Summary of Factors from Primary Research

Case Study Organisation 1

Positive Factor	Number of mentions	Negative Factor	Number of mentions
Commitment	5	Individual Self promotion / Ego	5
Clear and open communication	4	Lack of commitment	5
Clear objectives and action planning	4	Protectionism and competition	5
Effective Governance and Decision-Making	3	Cultural differences / lack of organisational fit	3
Organisational fit / similar cultures	2	Lack of organisational capacity / experience	2
Positive Environmental Factors / Policy Context	2	Power imbalance	2
Collaborative capacity of organisation	2	Lack of resources	2
Skilled membership / skilled staff	2	Uncertainty / Current economic climate	1
Strong interpersonal relationships	1	Lack of agreed aims and objectives	1
Sufficient and pooled resources	1	Complex processes / bureaucracy	1
Positive ways of managing conflict	1	Lack of agreed roles / accountability	1
Clear roles and accountabilities	1	Ineffective governance and decision-making	1
History of partnership working	1	Ineffective performance management	1
Flexibility / compromise	1		
Effective performance management	1		

Case Study Organisation 2

Positive Factor	Number of mentions		Negative Factor	Number of mentions
Skilled staff / membership	3		Protectionism and competition	5
Mutually Beneficial	3		Lack of resources / short-term funding	3
Sufficient and pooled resources	3		Lack of time	2
Effective performance management	2		Cultural differences / lack of organisational fit	1
Clear objectives and action planning	2		Different organisational structures / processes	1
Organisational fit / similar cultures	1		Uncertainty / current economic climate	1
Clear and open communication	1		Different expectations of partnership	1
Effective Governance and Decision-Making	1		Ineffective performance management	1
Commitment	1			
Positive Environmental Factors / Policy Context	1			
Strong interpersonal relationships	1			
History of partnership working	1			

Case Study Organisation 3

Positive Factor	Number of mentions		Negative Factor	Number of mentions
Strong interpersonal relationships	4		Negative interpersonal behaviour (blame, dishonesty, conflict)	5
Collaborative capacity of organisation	3		Individual Self promotion / Ego	3
Trust / Respect	2		Protectionism and competition	3
Mutually Beneficial	2		Lack of time	2
Clear objectives and action planning	2		Different organisational structures / processes	1
Positive risk taking	1		Lack of agreed roles / accountability	1
Flexibility / compromise	1		Lack of delivery / mission drift	1
Commitment	1		Uncertainty / current economic climate	1
Clear roles and accountabilities	1		Cultural differences / lack of organisational fit	1
History of partnership working	1		Ineffective governance and decision-making	1
Positive conflict resolution	1		Lack of agreed aims and objectives	1
Effective Governance and Decision-Making	1			

Case Study Organisation 4

Positive Factor	Number of mentions		Negative Factor	Number of mentions
Strong interpersonal relationships	6		Complex processes / bureaucracy	3
Clear and open communication	3		Lack of delivery / mission drift	3
Trust and respect	3		Lack of agreed roles / accountability	2
Mutually Beneficial	2		Different organisational structures / processes	2
Collaborative capacity of organisation	2		Lack of organisational capacity / experience	2
Skilled membership / skilled staff	2		Negative interpersonal behaviour (blame, dishonesty, conflict)	1
Organisational fit / similar cultures	1		Power imbalance	1
Effective Governance and Decision-Making	1		Lack of time	1
History of partnership working	1			

Case Study Organisation 5

Positive Factor	Number of mentions	Negative Factor	Number of mentions
Clear objectives and action planning	5	Protectionism and competition	4
Strong interpersonal relationships	5	Negative interpersonal behaviour (blame, dishonesty, conflict)	4
Organisational fit / similar cultures	3	Different expectations of partnership	2
Trust / respect	2	Lack of agreed roles / accountability	2
History of partnership working	2	Lack of time	2
Sufficient and pooled resources	2	Lack of flexibility / compromise	2
Skilled membership / skilled staff	2	Purely external drivers (political / policy / resources)	1
Clear and open communication	1	Lack of agreed aims and objectives	1
Mutually Beneficial	1	Lack of delivery / mission drift	1
Commitment	1	Cultural differences / lack of organisational fit	1
Clear roles and accountability	1		
Flexibility and Compromise	1		

Appendix 10 - Data Coding for Positive and Negative Factors

The below tables show the stages of data coding undertaken to identify ‘factors’ which influenced partnership working based on the Case Study organisations responses during the semi-structured interviews.

Stage One.

Pieces of data were highlighted from the transcripts as respondents identified a particular ‘factor’ or ‘influence’ as affecting their partnerships. The direct responses were transferred into a table by Case Study organisation and were coded positive or negative, as defined by the literature review. The responses were organised by theme to identify the occurrences of individual factors.

Positive	Negative
Case Study Organisation 1	
People – personalities Political will Positive / conducive context Similar cultures and ethos Services that fit e.g. similar size, values etc Organisational awareness of partnership agenda; collaboration forms part of organisational development Having negotiation and compromise Commitment on both sides Willingness to make it work at all levels. Willingness to make it work Commitment Consistent involvement Resources to make it work. Having a real aim	Where partners have not self-selected to work together e.g. brought together through tendering process Viewing partnership as threat Protectionism Competition Competition Partnerships that exclude Lack of clarity on aims and objectives Lack of consistency in personnel Inconsistent engagement / attendance Inconsistent commitment / input Reluctance to engage Lack of commitment Power imbalance Power imbalance resource imbalance Lack of resources

<p>Clear objectives Re-affirming clear objectives Where there is a common objective</p> <p>Having a track record</p> <p>Honesty and open dialogue Honesty and frank discussion Open dialogue Good Communication</p> <p>Formal TOR / Memo of Agreement – helps keep on track Clear decision-making Clear governance</p> <p>Positive ways of managing conflict</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p>Clear performance measures</p> <p>Skilled and trained staff Committed and skilled members</p>	<p>Organisations not looking beyond their own boundaries and being strategic. Lack of organisational credibility</p> <p>Current economic climate</p> <p>Incompatible cultures Different cultures different cultural views of service delivery</p> <p>Complex and unworkable processes</p> <p>Lack of accountability</p> <p>Ego Ego Egos and personalities Representing own agenda Personalities – promoting own agendas</p> <p>Lack of clear decision-making / voting arrangements</p> <p>Poor performance management</p>
Case Study Organisation 2	
<p>Track record</p> <p>Having named personal contacts</p> <p>Consistent staffing arrangements Skilled staff Having staff skilled in partnerships</p> <p>Being clear on what you want to achieve Being clear on objectives</p> <p>Motivation and commitment</p> <p>Benefits for all partners Mutually beneficial Benefits both partners</p> <p>Positive policies such as more focus on outcomes</p>	<p>Protectionism Protectionism Competition / tendering Protectionism Unwillingness to share practice</p> <p>Uncertainty re: funding Lack of resources Lack of resources</p> <p>Lack of time Time intensive</p> <p>Lack of understanding of organisation and what they can bring to partnership</p> <p>Having different values</p>

<p>Sufficient Time and resources Sufficient staff resources</p> <p>Strong Service Level Agreements for effective decision-making</p> <p>Similar values</p> <p>Good communication</p> <p>Clearly established performance measures</p>	<p>Inconsistent performance systems across partners</p> <p>Differences in staffing structures e.g. salaries, Terms and Conditions;</p> <p>Changing and uncertain climate</p>
Case Study Organisation 3	
<p>Track record</p> <p>Being a learning organisation Learning from experiences Capacity of organisation to engage in partnership through sharing skills and learning</p> <p>Trusting relationships highly trusting</p> <p>Personal relationships Positive relationships Relationships with people who are genuine, open and forthright Personality of the people involved</p> <p>Transparency / clarity of agenda Being clear from start on objectives</p> <p>Clear benefits for all parties offering something distinct that benefits all partners</p> <p>Willingness to make it work</p> <p>Being able to task risks</p> <p>Flexible and responsive</p> <p>Tools such as SLAs</p>	<p>Protectionism Organisational Self-interest Partnerships that exclude</p> <p>Using partnership to promote own agenda Ego Self promotion at expense of partnership</p> <p>Lack of clarity on roles / responsibilities</p> <p>Duplication of decision making</p> <p>Antagonism towards individual organisations / Blame Blame Manipulation Political manoeuvring</p> <p>lack of time – impact on core business; requires significant time – can be difficult to balance</p> <p>Lack of organisational fit</p> <p>Different operating environments etc.</p> <p>Mission drift</p> <p>Uncertainty due to policy context</p> <p>Failure to agree aims and objectives</p>

Transparency and accountability	
Constructive conflict	
Case Study Organisation 4	
Skill of individuals Skilled individuals Communication Two way communication Regular communication Positive Relationships Personal relationships Relationship driven Stable relationships Positive interpersonal relationships Having key contacts who are leading the project Both organisations entering with “the same spirit and culture Trust Trust Respect & Honesty Organisational ethos – being outward facing / having collaboration at their centre Being a learning organisation Clear understanding of each others motivations Understanding Clear understanding of the benefits / advantages for each partner Clear benefits for each organisation Having a track record – helps partners feel more secure Effective decision-making	Naval gazing / lack of productivity Lack of delivery Mission drift Organisations that lack collaborative experience; Insular looking organisations Trying to do things by committee Overly Bureaucratic Bureaucracy Power imbalance Lack of honesty Differences in processes and functions Different staff structures Lack of accountability – can negatively affect your reputation if performance issues Unclear lines of responsibility Insufficient time

Case Study Organisation 5	
<p>Track record Strong record of delivery</p> <p>Strong communication</p> <p>Open relationships Openness Inclusive and encouraging relationships Personal relationships Quality personal relationships</p> <p>Cultural fit (especially in strategic partnerships) Organisations fit well together culturally Organisations of similar spirit / ethos</p> <p>Honesty and trust Trust</p> <p>Clarity Being clear on objectives Clarity about mission and objectives Clarity on objectives Clarity of objectives</p> <p>Clear boundaries and roles</p> <p>Willingness to compromise</p> <p>Both sides getting something out of it</p> <p>Commitment from all partners</p> <p>Sufficient time to invest having the necessary resources</p> <p>Skilled staff Expertise in members / staff group</p>	<p>Lack of honesty Lack of honesty Aggression / abrasiveness poor interpersonal relationships</p> <p>Different understanding / expectations of partnerships Lack of common understanding</p> <p>Purely commercial drivers</p> <p>Lack of clarity Lack of transparency</p> <p>Different organisational cultures</p> <p>Lack of time Time intensive</p> <p>Unwillingness to concede / compromise Lack of flexibility through over-reliance on contracts</p> <p>Competition has put partnerships under strain Partners are now competitors – has negatively impacted relationship Partners are no longer willing to share practice because of tendering and competition Competition</p> <p>Mission drift</p> <p>Confusion on goals / objectives</p>

Stage 2

The second stage of data analysis took the form of aligning the data identified from Stage 1 across all of the Case Study Organisations thereby “grouping” all of the pieces of data together in a cross-case analysis. Each category was then assigned a label based on the findings from an analysis of published literature and case studies, which identified influencers or barriers to partnership working. The number of pieces of data within each category was then counted to ascertain the most influential factors.

The below tables outline the categories and the data coding that contributed to each category, which has been transferred from Stage 1.

Positive Factors

Categories	Number of mentions	Data identified from literature review
Strong interpersonal relationships	17	<p>CS 1 - People – personalities</p> <p>CS 2 - Having named personal contacts</p> <p>CS 3- Personal relationships; Positive relationships; Relationships with people who are genuine, open and forthright; Personality of the people involved</p> <p>CS 4 – Positive Relationships; Personal relationships; Relationship driven; Stable relationships; Positive interpersonal relationships; Having key contacts who are leading the project;</p> <p>CS 5 - Open relationships; Openness; Inclusive and encouraging relationships; Personal relationships; Quality personal relationships</p>

Clear objectives and action planning	13	<p>CS 1 - Having a real aim; Clear objectives; Re-affirming clear objectives; Where there is a common objective</p> <p>CS 2 - Being clear on what you want to achieve; Being clear on objectives</p> <p>CS 3 - Transparency / clarity of agenda; Being clear from start on objectives</p> <p>CS 5 - Clarity; Being clear on objectives; Clarity about mission and objectives; Clarity on objectives; Clarity of objectives</p>
Skilled membership / skilled staff	9	<p>CS 1 - Skilled and trained staff; Committed and skilled members</p> <p>CS 2 - Consistent staffing arrangements; Skilled staff; Having staff skilled in partnerships</p> <p>CS 4 - Skill of individuals; Skilled individuals</p> <p>CS 5 - Skilled staff; Expertise in members / staff group</p>
Clear and open communication	9	<p>CS 1 - Honesty and open dialogue; Honesty and frank discussion; Open dialogue; Good Communication</p> <p>CS 2 - Good communication</p> <p>CS 4 – Communication; Two way communication; Regular communication</p> <p>CS 5 - Strong communication</p>
Mutually Beneficial	8	<p>CS 2 - Benefits for all partners; Mutually beneficial; Benefits both partners</p>

		<p>CS 3 - Clear benefits for all parties; offering something distinct that benefits all partners</p> <p>CS 4 - Clear understanding of the benefits / advantages for partners; clear benefits for each organisation</p> <p>CS 5 - Both sides getting something out of it</p>
Commitment	8	<p>CS 1 - Commitment on both sides; Willingness to make it work at all levels; Willingness to make it work; Commitment; Consistent involvement</p> <p>CS 2 - Motivation and commitment</p> <p>CS 3 - Willingness to make it work</p> <p>CS 5 - Commitment from all partners</p>
Collaborative capacity of organisation	7	<p>CS 1 - Organisational awareness of partnership agenda; collaboration forms part of organisational development</p> <p>CS 3 - Being a learning organisation; learning from experiences; Capacity of organisation to engage in partnership through sharing skills and learning</p> <p>CS 4 - Organisational ethos – being outward facing / having collaboration at their centre; Being a learning organisation</p>
Organisational fit / similar cultures	7	<p>CS 1 - Similar cultures and ethos; Services that fit e.g. similar size, values etc</p>

		<p>CS 2 - Similar values</p> <p>CS 4 - Both organisations entering with “the same spirit and culture</p> <p>CS 5 - Cultural fit (especially in strategic partnerships;) organisations fit well together culturally; Organisations of similar spirit / ethos</p>
Trust / respect	7	<p>CS 3 - Trusting relationships; highly trusting</p> <p>CS 4 – Trust; Trust; Respect & Honesty</p> <p>CS 5 – Honesty and trust; Trust</p>
History of partnership working	6	<p>CS 1 - Having a track record</p> <p>CS 2 - Track record</p> <p>CS 3 - Track record</p> <p>CS 4 - Having a track record – helps partners feel more secure</p> <p>CS 5 - Track record; Strong record of delivery</p>
Effective Governance and Decision-Making	6	<p>CS 1 - Formal TOR / Memo of Agreement – helps keep on track; Clear decision-making; Clear governance</p> <p>CS 2 - Strong Service Level Agreements for effective decision-making</p> <p>CS 3 - Tools such as SLAs</p> <p>CS 4 - Effective decision-making</p>
Sufficient and pooled resources	6	<p>CS 1 - Resources to make it work</p> <p>CS 2 - Sufficient Time; sufficient resources; Staff resources</p>

		CS 5 – Sufficient time to invest; having the necessary resources
Positive Environmental Factors / Policy Context	3	CS 1 - Political will; positive / conducive context CS 2 - Positive policies such as more focus on outcomes
Flexibility / compromise	3	CS 1 - Having negotiation and comprise CS 3 - Flexible and responsive CS 5 - Willingness to compromise
Clear roles and accountabilities	3	CS 1 - Accountability CS 3 – Transparency and accountability CS 5 Clear boundaries and roles
Positive conflict resolution	2	CS 1 - Positive ways of managing conflict CS 3 - Constructive conflict
Effective performance management	2	CS 1 - Clear performance measures CS 2 - Clearly established performance measures
Positive risk taking	1	CS 3 - Being able to task risks

Negative Factors

Categories	Number of mentions	Data identified from literature review
Protectionism and competition	17	<p>CS 1 - Viewing partnership as threat; protectionism; Competition; Competition; Partnerships that exclude</p> <p>CS 2 – Protectionism; Protectionism; Competition / tendering; Protectionism; unwillingness to share practice</p> <p>CS 3 - Protectionism; Organisational Self-interest; Partnerships that exclude</p> <p>CS 5 - Competition has put partnerships under strain; Partners are now competitors – has negatively impacted relationship; Partners are no longer willing to share practice because of tendering and competition; Competition</p>
Negative interpersonal behaviour (blame, dishonesty, conflict)	10	<p>CS 3 - Manipulation; Blame; Blame; Antagonism towards individual organisations; Political manoeuvring</p> <p>CS 4 - Lack of honesty</p> <p>CS 5 - Lack of honesty; Lack of honesty; Aggression / abrasiveness; poor interpersonal relationships</p>
Individual Self promotion / Ego	8	<p>CS 1 – Ego; Ego; Egos and personalities; representing own agenda; promoting own agendas</p> <p>CS 3 - Using partnership to promote own agenda; Ego; Self promotion at expense of partnership</p>
Lack of time	7	CS 2 - Lack of time; Time intensive

		<p>CS 3 – lack of time – impact on core business; requires significant time – can be difficult to balance</p> <p>CS 4 - Insufficient time</p> <p>CS 5 - Lack of time; Time intensive</p>
Cultural differences / lack of organisational fit	6	<p>CS 1 - Different cultures; incompatible cultures; different cultural views of service delivery</p> <p>CS 2 - having different values</p> <p>CS 3 - Lack of organisational fit</p> <p>CS 5 - Different organisational cultures</p>
Lack of agreed roles / accountability	6	<p>CS 1 - Lack of accountability</p> <p>CS 3 - Lack of clarity on roles / responsibilities</p> <p>CS 4 - Lack of accountability – can negatively affect reputation if performance issues; Unclear lines of responsibility</p> <p>CS 5 - Lack of clarity; Lack / transparency</p>
Lack of resources / short-term funding	5	<p>CS 1 - Resource imbalance; Lack of resources</p> <p>CS 2 - Uncertainty re: funding; Lack of resources; Lack of resources</p>
Lack of delivery / mission drift	5	<p>CS 3 - Mission drift</p> <p>CS 4 - Naval gazing – partnership becomes a talking shop; lack of productivity; lack of delivery;</p> <p>CS 5 - Mission drift</p>
Lack of commitment	5	<p>CS 1 - Lack of consistency in personnel; Inconsistent engagement / attendance; Inconsistent commitment / input; Reluctance to engage; Lack of commitment</p>
Complex processes / bureaucracy	4	<p>CS 1 - Complex and unworkable processes</p> <p>CS 4 - Trying to do things by committee; Overly Bureaucratic; Bureaucracy</p>

Lack of organisational capacity / experience	4	CS 1 - Lack of organisational credibility; Organisations not looking beyond their own boundaries and being strategic CS 4 - Organisations that lack collaborative experience; Insular looking organisations
Different organisational structures / processes	4	CS 2 - Differences in staffing structures e.g. salaries, Terms and Conditions; CS 3 - different operating environments etc. CS 4 - Differences in processes and functions; different staff structures
Power imbalance	3	CS 1 - Power imbalance; Power imbalance CS 4 - Power imbalance
Different expectations of partnership	3	CS 2 - Lack of understanding of organisation and what they can bring to partnership CS 5 - Different understanding / expectations of partnerships; Lack of common understanding
Uncertainty / current economic climate	3	CS 1 - Current economic climate CS 2 - Changing and uncertain climate CS 3 - Uncertainty due to policy context
Lack of agreed aims and objectives	3	CS 1 - Lack of clarity on aims and objectives CS 3 - Failure to agree aims and objectives CS 5 – confusion on goals / objectives
Lack of flexibility / compromise	2	CS 5 - Unwillingness to concede / compromise; Lack of flexibility through over-reliance on contracts

Ineffective performance management	2	CS 1 - Poor performance management CS 2 - Inconsistent performance systems across partners
Ineffective governance and decision-making	2	CS 1 - Lack of clear decision-making / voting arrangements CS 3 - Duplication of decision making
Purely external drivers (political / policy / resources)	2	CS 1 - Where partners have not self-selected to work together e.g. brought together through tendering process CS 5 - Purely commercial drivers